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THE DIARY

25

OR

A DÉSENNUYÉE.

“L'expérience du monde brise le cœur, ou le bronze.”

CHAMPFORT.

PHILADELPHIA:
E. L. CAREY AND A. HART.

1836.

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THE DIARY OF A DÉSENNUYÉE.

COVENTRY, April 6th, 183.—To-morrow, then, I shall be in London!—Am I well-advised in commencing my little Diary with the worn-out pen and mouldy ink of an inn standish, amid the jingling of bells, and jarring of waiters? No matter!—People are apt to inveigh against the stir and tumult of an inn, and protest they can neither collect their faculties for thinking, nor tranquilize them for sleeping, amid the bustle of such places. For *my* part, I care little for the tumult that affects only my senses. Let the “party in number five” ring or wrangle as they please;—“I have no part in them or theirs.” Whether they eat their toast dry or buttered, let me take mine ease in mine inn, congratulating myself that, thus far, my journey has been safe and pleasant.

Dear England! How beautiful it looks after my seven years’ banishment! how beautiful, and how prosperous! What neatness, what completeness, after the ragged aspect of things at Ballyshumna! *Here* I am not ashamed of living in comfort, or travelling for my enjoyment. The lofty pyramid of society, whose regular gradation is so perceptible, from the wide basis to the tapering apex, seems as if in England it held together the firmer for its polished corner-stones; and it is, at all events, a relief to one’s selfishness to look upon snug cottages, and a healthy, happy peasantry, instead of that degradation of human nature which met my eye at every turn in the neighbourhood of Delaval Castle. The fortune of Rothschild, and the wisdom of Solomon, would not have enabled me to alleviate a fourth part of the distress I was fated to witness; and one of the few acts of kindness I have to acknowledge towards Colonel Delaval, is his bequest of the family estates to his excellent brother, leaving me and my jointure free liberty to search the world for as much happiness as may lie at the purchase of pounds, shillings, and pence.

Yet, how strange a destiny is mine! A widow at five-and-twenty, with six thousand a-year, and an honourable position

in society,—good health, good conscience, and (between myself and my Diary) a tolerably good appearance; yet all this frustrated and embittered by my sad experience of the hollowness of the world! Married at seventeen to the man of my choice, all seemed to smile upon me when I followed Colonel Delaval to Ireland; nor could I forgive my sister Armine, for whispering, on the eve of our union, that an acquaintance of six weeks scarcely justified me in placing my happiness within his keeping. What prescience, alas! rendered *her* so wise? How came she to guess that Delaval, in withdrawing from the army on his marriage, and devoting himself to the pleasures of Irish squirehood, would become—but let the past be forgotten.

Thanks to my experience, I re-enter the world with a heart steeled to insensibility, and a resolution to be indebted to my head alone for future pleasures. Instead of quarrelling with society (the common error of misanthropes, who, like myself, desire only a life of tranquillity), I shall, in my worst of humours, doff the world aside, and bid it pass, in my best, smile in its face, and thank it for its smiles;—then retire like an oyster into my shell, as easily forgetting as forgotten!

It is true, Armine and I entertain for each other a more than common sisterly affection. The early loss of our parents, the secluded life we led in Staffordshire, under the care of our good aunt Margaret, now gathered to the vault of all the Montresors, rendered us in youth mutually dependent on each other's friendship. But the experiences of our married life seem to have created estrangements; and we are no longer fitted to understand each other as formerly. I once saw in a pavilion, near the Lake of Windermere, four contiguous windows of variously stained glass, imparting to the same landscape the aspect of the four seasons. Just so it is with us. Armine looks at life through the summer window,—I, through the winter! Our prospects are alike,—“alike—but, oh! how different!”

It is, therefore, with my little Diary that I must philosophize;—it is my little Diary I must take into my confidence. Having lived so long alone, or worse than alone, I have acquired a habit of gossiping and arguing with myself; and surely our opinions are never so fairly submitted to our judgment, as when arrayed in black and white before us.—Here, therefore, begins my first chapter of a new existence. A sad one, or a merry? Oh! for a sybil to unfold! On one thing I am determined: I bid defiance to the mere *ennuis* of life. Never again will I submit to be *bored*!

My cousin, Lady Cecilia Delaval, writes me word, that the house she has engaged for me, in St. James's Place, is “a perfect *bijou*,” a cant phrase of hers. She wrote me the same thing some years ago, of Azor, her pet lap-dog; and

when she brought the little brute to Delaval Castle, the bijou turned out to be an asthmatic pug! Better, however, trust to her experience, than venture alone into the wide world of London, which I know so little, yet dislike so much. How detestable were those biennial visits to town with my aunt Margaret Montresor, who, every year or two, used to migrate from Staffordshire to a ready-furnished house, where the windows would not open, nor the doors close, to persecute her solicitors with a new plea for her old Chancery suit, and Armine and myself with visits to the dentist, staymaker, shoemaker, the wax-work, and the Eidouranion,—Hatchard's and Rivington's,—to torment our souls and bodies into the way they should go! Ten years, however, have since elapsed; my days of dentists and back-boards are over; and, though I may revisit Hatchard's shop, it will not be to procure a series of Pinnock's Catechisms, cased in strong calf, for the *use and abuse* of the school-room.

St. James's Place, April 9th.—Not a fault to be found with my new residence! A house neither too large nor too small, overlooking the park; fitted up only last spring, by one of the fashionable *virtu*-mongers, for a newly-married couple, who spent five years' income during their first season in town, and are now doing penance for their folly in some barrack of a palace on the Arno. Poor little bride! it must have cost her many a pang to quit the shrine where she had been worshipped. There are a thousand traces of womanliness in the house, such as were never impressed by the hand of an upholsterer; particularly in my own room and boudoir, the walls of which are hung with light chintz and muslin draperies, with windows opening through a conservatory to the park.

Lady Cecilia was waiting for me on my arrival, as lively and as agreeable as ever. She is enchanted that Armine and her husband will not be in town for some months; and declares that the Herberts are just the sort of humdrum people to spoil me,—“set me in a wrong pattern.”

After all, her notions are rather arbitrary. I used to fancy Lady Cecilia the most independent and easy woman in the world; but her ease turns out to be a laborious affair,—a perpetual warfare with the ceremonial of life. There is such a thing, I suspect, as being the slave of one's liberty.

I believe, however, I cannot put myself under safer tutelage than her's. No one is so much the fashion. She commands the interest and influence of her sister, the Marchioness of Clackmannan (a lady of the bedchamber, and patroness of Almack's, and all that sort of thing), without the bore and trouble of place-holding; while her stupid husband, Sir Jenison Delaval, *s'empresse de dire amen à toutes ses messes*, fancying her, or at least proclaiming her, the best of wives, because she is wise enough to let him pass his life at his club, well-bred.

enough to be civil to him in public, and judicious enough never to see him in private. Lady C. is, in short, a woman of whom is called the world. She has prodigious tact; always some little scheme or other, and which invariably succeeds. But, after all, the objects she accomplishes are comparatively trifling; and, to spend one's life in such manœuvres, seems like driving a forty-horse-power engine to cutting chaff.

Nothing, for instance, can exceed her delight at having outwitted Lady Wexford, a tortoise of a dowager (whom I used to know in Dublin), in the choice of a certain opera-box, which we are to share together. It strikes me that any other would have suited us as well. But Lady Cecilia tells me General Vernon has had a ticket of that identical box for the last thirty years, and will not be at the trouble of changing it; so that she is sure of getting rid of her spare ticket. It is plain that she does not choose to have a place at the disposal of Sir Jenkins. The box holds only four; and she advises me to retain the mine. I amused her not a little by inquiring whether General Vernon was a pleasant man, as she seemed so glad to secure him; and she amused me no less by replying, that he was a bore *par excellence*, but too well taught to dream of setting foot in the box to which he belongs.

10th.—Just returned from a long drive with Lady Cecilia. What multitudes of people! Yet they say there will be none in town till after Easter; and nothing going on till the end of May. The "nothing," so called, consists, however, in nightly parties, twice as numerous and brilliant as any I have been in the habit of enjoying; and last night I accompanied Lady Cecilia to a card-party, comprehending, she assured me, the *élite of the élite*. One of the Sicilian mummy-vaults, described by travellers, must certainly present just such a grotto-clave of lean, yellow, shrivelled, inexpressive faces. In the course of the evening, a few male individuals, half a century younger than the enshrined divinities of the temple, made their appearance, but of these the small-talk was so very small, and the big looks so very big, that I took refuge in my own observations.

"You will like them better when their jargon ceases to be an unknown tongue," said Lady Cecilia, after presenting me to our hostess, a good kind of roundabout woman, turbanned after the most approved fashion of countess-dowagerhood. "This is a house of which it is indispensable to have the *entrée*,—open first and last in the season, when nothing better is to be had. Besides, the *habitues* of the set have a way of discussing those who do not belong to them, which makes it prudent to join their forces."

"What unsafe people for friends!"

"You surely mean, 'what unsafe people for enemies?'" Yonder crooked little woman, for instance, with the bright

eyes and tiny feet, is, to strangers, as malicious as a monkey; and quite as faithful and amusing, to any one who will be at the trouble of making a pet of her."

"Be more gracious, my dear Lady Cecilia," said I. "Compare her, at least, to a sprig of sweet-briar—fragrant and charming to those who handle it with dexterity."

"She, too, is the centre of a *petit comité*, to which you will find it worth while to belong, unless you choose to venture on being tomahawked, by declaring war against the tribe. In this house your passport to favour is an easy one. Lose a few guineas now and then at whist, and you will be free of the set. In *that* something more is wanting; you must manage to make them laugh, either *at* or *with* you; be very absurd, or very entertaining. It is a set, in short, where excitement is the order of the day,—full of lions, and other monsters, after their kind. But the *succès* of a mere lion is the shortest of all possible successes. His popularity wears out before he has time to establish himself."

"And in what style do you intend *me faire évènement* among these people?" said I, anxious to discover the designs upon me.

"I have scarcely decided! Pretty, well-dressed, lively, rich, disengaged, with nothing to provoke that fretful porcupine, the world, to set its quills at you; I think I shall produce you as an agreeability."

"Pray, dont! I have not a set smile at my disposal; and cannot give myself the trouble of looking and talking delightfully with all my might for the gratification of strangers."

"My dear, you *must* give yourself a few months' trouble, if you intend to be popular. Once established as an agreeability, your reputation will carry you on, season after season. But during this, your first spring in town, you must stand, eap in hand, in the market-place, to secure the most sweet voices of the people worth knowing."

"But if I choose to be an independent member, and disdain the courtship of votes?"

"Absurd! No one living in society can be independent. The world is like a watch-dog, which fawns upon you, or tears you to pieces. If you choose to remain in whole skin, take my advice—throw the beast a sop or two out of your abundance, and make it wag its tail in your honour for the remainder of your days."

What a system! What a stifling of honourable sentiment! What a sacrifice of principle! Heaven preserve me from becoming a convert to Lady Cecilia's code of minor morals! I can understand lighting a candle to the devil; for "the prince of darkness is a gentleman." But, to burn farthing rushlights to all the little dirty imps of Pandemonium—to use a favourite proverb of the vulgar, *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*.

12th.—I complained to-day to Lady Cecilia, that her dress-maker had sent me home a frightful gown.

“She was quite right,” replied my friend. “Madame Biais saw that you would be a bad customer, and did not put herself out of the way to please you.”

“A bad customer?”

“You took the liberty of asking for her bill.”

“Which you call being a bad customer?”

“In our class and hers a ready-money customer implies a person who changes or dismisses his tradesmen as the fancy takes him. No fashionable tradesman cares to be employed by those who have a right to examine his goods, and find fault with his prices. These people prefer clients many pages deep in their books, who dare not grumble at being overcharged. Madame Biais, for instance, knows not what to make of a lady who gives her the trouble of writing out an account in the midst of the hurry and bustle of the season. By the way, my dear, do you like Mr. Penrhyn?”

“The man who sat so long with us last night at the opera?”

“So long, indeed, that I began to apprehend mischief from the double barrels of Mrs. Percy’s *lorgnette*, steadily levelled at you during his visit. Mrs. Percy (let me anticipate the inquiry you are about to make) is a sort of lay impropriator of poor Penrhyn; a very pretty woman, with no further harm in her than an appetite for being talked about with the most fashionable man of the season, be he who he may. Just now, she will not allow Penrhyn to call his soul his own;—writes him sentimental billets, keeps him listening to her guitar, or flageolet, or Jew’s-harp, or accordion, or some such trash, merely that his cabriolet may be seen waiting at her door; or stops him at Piccadilly Gate, to be smiled at, and whispered to, through her carriage window, under the observation of fifteen hundred people passing by, and the Achilles standing still. Mrs. Percy would be miserable, unless she knew herself to be the object of scandal.”

“And Mr. Penrhyn?”

“The lady’s pretence of a *penchant* at first amused him, and he bore being whispered to, smiled at, and billet-douxed, with remarkable fortitude. But, the novelty of her enthusiasm over, he grew sick of his Barmecide’s feast; and now, I never beheld so bored a man! Yet he seems afraid of declaring off; for there is no sort of *esclandre* she is not capable of provoking, in order to *appear* the heroine of a romance.”

“Why does he not manage to get out of fashion?”

“The fates have been against him! Lord Wanderford, arriving, as swarthy as a moor, from his travels in Abyssinia, threatened, a few weeks ago, to dethrone him. But, unluckily, Penrhyn’s grandfather, old Lord Penrhyn, is likely to die; when he will become one of the wealthiest individuals in

Europe. His *éclat* thus enhanced, poor Mrs. Percy will make herself more ridiculous than ever. By the way, my dear, I recommend you to marry Penrhyn, and put them both out of their pain."

"Pray, find them some other cure," said I. "The thing I like least is a dowager dandy—a superannuated London man—an out-pensioner of White's—without an idea or an ambition beyond St. James's Street. Your Mr. Penrhyn *connait bien* son *Londres*, but he knows nothing else; I never saw such a cut-and-dried specimen of his caste."

"There is more in him, however," said Lady Cecilia, rising to take leave, "than you seem to have had wit to discover. The man has a gift of solemn irony, which victimizes even the most wary. But for the diversion he has found in making game of the Percy by his *persiflage*, he never would have had patience with her vagaries."

"I certainly had not the wit to discover all this," said I, interrupting Lady Cis; "or it would have determined me to close my doors against Mr. Penrhyn."

18th.—My visiting list already extends to many pages; including the various connexions, near and remote, of the families of Montresor and Delaval. Lady Cecilia, too, has presented me to her own set of acquaintance; many of them, I fear, "pleasant, but wrong." I do not, at least, feel *safe* in their society; nor can I help listening to ascertain whether the ice on which we are sliding together be not giving way under our feet. Would that Armine and my brother-in-law were arrived!

A pleasant dinner yesterday at Sir Richard and Lady Dunbar's: a well-appointed establishment—handsome plate, excellent cook. But one feels invited there to render them justice. Lady Dunbar piques herself on her proficiency in the etiquettes of life, and loves to impress you with due admiration of her *savoir vivre*; but not a creature was ever welcomed to the house from the genuine impulse of hospitality. Their dinners have established them in society—obtained *him* the *entree* of the best clubs—and, in some shower of coronets produced by the stormy state of the political atmosphere, will, perhaps, buy him into the peerage. "Prejudice apart," whispered Mr. Penrhyn to me yesterday, at dinner, "this *potage à la financière* deserves the Upper house."

The first time I accompanied Lady Cecilia Delaval to old Lady Kent's card-party, I was much amused by the uneasy manner in which she was addressed by a certain Lady Mardynville,—evidently in an agony lest Lady Cis should present the "new woman" to her.

"Have mercy on Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville, and do not look hard at them till they have ascertained that you are worthy of their acquaintance," whispered my friend, with assumed gravity.

"And what are *they*, of *mine*?" I asked, as the baronet and his wife scuttled fussily out of the way of an introduction.

"Heaven forbid that such pains-taking people should be lightly spoken of," she replied. "Two more persevering distinction-hunters never climed the ladder of society. From the day of their sympathetic union, they have neither eaten, drunk, nor slept, with any other object before their eyes than their own aggrandizement in those of the world. Not a levee, not a drawing-room, that they do not attend; not a royal porter's book in which the names of Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville are not inscribed with 'damnable iteration'; not a ministerial lacquey, to whom their liveries are not familiar as *Punch's* puppet-show. They have deserted their family place, to hire a residence within view of the flag-staff of Windsor Castle; and were heard to congratulate each other one winter, when their children caught the measles at Brighton at the same moment with Prince George. Sir Robert used to answer every body's inquiries with assurances that little Bobby was better, and Prince George quite out of danger."

Such was Cecilia's definition of the amiable couple who so manifestly despised me; and last night, at the Dunbar's, they fully justified her diatribe. When they entered the room, the Duke of Merioneth happened to sit next me on the sofa, conversing in that familiar whisper by which he thinks proper to mark to the world that he knows only those whom he knows intimately. The whisperee of a duke became, of course, a fine thing in the eyes of such people as the Mardynvilles. In the course of ten minutes, up came Lady Dunbar, all smiles,—Lady Mardynville, all courtesies,—determined to make my acquaintance.

"Long desirous of the honour—moving in the same circle—meeting night after night, without the privilege of speaking; so excessively awkward," &c. &c.

The duke rose, and stalked away to make room for my new friends; while Mr. Penrhyn shocked Sir Robert to death, by pretending to mistake his household button for that of the R. Y. C.!

This morning arrived cards, and, (without waiting to have them returned) an invitation for a dinner-party, three weeks hence.—*Shan't go!* What, but politics, can have been typified in the golden pippin of Ate? and what ages of discord has not the fatal fruit engendered? Yet, surely, the factions of Guelph and Ghibelline, or White and Red Rose, never carried their barbarian animosities to so unchristian a pitch, as the polite hatred of modern Whig and Tory? Since the triumph of the Catholic Question, political spleen has become a species of endemic at the west end; a cholera morbus never to be extirpated. It is considered a mark of *caste* among the fine ladies to "doat on the Duke of Wellington," or to "adore

the present ministry;” the intellectual coteries affecting the latter creed,—the exclusives, the former. The ventilator, it seems, set their brains a-madding for a season or so; and, just as they all went hero-mad during the peninsular war, they became statesman-mad when the star of Canning, Brougham, or Stanley, raged as the dog-star of the hour.

And then they so dearly love a little bit of finesse, to sneak their pitiful way to a vote, either at Brookes's or in the house. Madame L——n was the first to bring this sort of *tripotage* into fashion. So well-bred, so well dressed, nothing *she* did appeared amiss; like Cleopatra,

“Vilest things,
Became themselves in her, and holy bishops
Blessed her when”

she advocated the cause of holy alliance. From *her* more than one flighty dame derives a precedent for a system of intrigues, such as the Duchesse de Longueville might rise from her grave to applaud.

After all, the most able of female politicians makes herself as disagreeable as ridiculous. Women carry their sensibilities with them even into the ventilator, and exercise their feelings when they fancy they are exercising their judgment. They see through the eyes of their heart, and hear with its ears; and sometimes, unluckily, talk out of its abundance. Yesterday, at the Delavals', a gradually rising murmur reached us from the end of the table furthest from the place where I was quietly eating my soup, which, at length, deepened into a decided storm. Mrs. Percy, and the old Duchess of Plymouth, were speaking, what they call their minds, the plainest English ever uttered by lips polite; each reviling the particular friends or particular party of the other. Lady Cecilia, who hates to have the pleasantness of her parties broken in upon, kept trying to pour oil upon the waves; but her oil was mere *huile de roses*, of too light a quality to subdue billows so uproarious; and Penrhyn, a dear lover of mischief, kept spurring the belligerents on to battle by little minikin-pin pricks of impertinence.

Now, of what use was all their squabbling, either to their party (their party!) or themselves? Not a word uttered by either, for arguments they did not attempt to utter, would have weighed against an eider-duck's feather! On one side it was always “It is well known that, if the duke thought proper, he might”—so and so; on the other, “Nothing but the paltry intrigues, and the under-hand cabals of the Tories have prevented”—so and so. What a draw-back upon rational conversation and social feeling! Better talk to all eternity of the weather, as we used to do in Ireland; or of *chiffons*, as I am told they do in Paris. Lady Cecilia declares that three

or four of the best houses in town have become insupportable during the last few years, on account of the state of parties; among others, that of her charming sister, the marchioness; where,

“Under which Club, Bezonian? Speak, or die!” is the first inquiry made of every new pretender to her acquaintance.

George Hanton, who sat next me yesterday, during this battle of frogs and mice, could not conceal his indignation that the process of so good a dinner (when he happened to be in good appetite) should be disturbed by such impudent bickering!

“What bores those women are!” he whispered to me, with a face of the deepest concern—“I protest I hardly know what I have got on my plate” and, with Hanton, *such* ignorance is any-thing but bliss. I remember him, ten years ago, coming to pass the holidays at Lord Randall’s in Staffordshire, when Armine and I were young and disengaged; and then, as now, having eyes only for an *entrée*. His time and fortune are spent in ministering to his palate; and a first-rate education seems to have instructed him in nothing but the gormandizings of mankind. He recognizes the Spartans only by their black broth, and the Romans by the gluttonies of Apicius or Lucullus. Talk to him of the state of the arts during the middle ages, and he will answer that, in those times, forest venison was a most delicious thing; and, in the way of chronology, instead of dating from “before the invention of gunpowder,” or “the discovery of printing,” George is apt to time his epochs by “before tea was brought into Europe,” or “before potatoes were in general use.” His acquaintance, nay his friends, are chosen *selon* the merits of their cook, or their power of appreciating the cooks of others. He was heard to exclaim of one of the greatest ministers of modern times, “I have a bad opinion of Lord ——. I once saw what pretended to be a *suprême de volaille* at his table, which was literally made of veal.”

“And what then—do you suppose he *ordered* such a substitute?”

“No!—but what an opinion must his cook have had of his understanding, to venture on such a subterfuge; and, after all, who knows one better than one’s cook?”—Hanton has dropped the acquaintance of the Mardynvilles, because their turbot is high instead of their venison, and refused to be presented to pretty little Lady Ryland, on account of the badness of her dinners. “It is time lost,” said he, “to know such people.” He invariably places himself next me at dinner; and I have discovered that my ignorance of gastronomic science constitutes my attraction. I have not taste enough to secure the truffles, or the *beaux morceaux* of the made-dishes brought

round; and Mr. Hanton, as my next neighbour, profits by the oversight. I fear he will judge me unworthy of an invitation to one of his dinners, which I hear highly extolled by those, *bien entendu*, who hold

That to live well means nothing but to eat.

May 1.—What a beautiful city is London at this season of the year, when the spring breezes, dispersing both fog and smoke, afford glimpses of blue sky! What order in the streets;—what courtesy, what splendour in the shops!—Regent Street, for instance, with its macadamized road covered with carriages, and wide pavements thronged with passengers, is a very type of the times;—all show and speculation,—all activity and superficiality. Then the west end squares, and the streets leading into Park Lane,—how dignifiedly dull;—“nothing to be seen there,” as some would-be Brummel observed, “but the aristocracy, *savoir*, a population of lords and footmen.” Each isolated mansion of that favoured region contains, within its little world, all that ingenuity and industry tender in exchange for wealth; the best productions of art, the newest combinations of science, the most graceful inventions of fancy; to render life more easy and exquisite for those who know not a discomfiture beyond the rumpling of the rose leaf!

Then the two quarters that arose under the reign of that king of the surfaces, George IV!—the Regent’s Park,—the Athen’s of the Bloomsburians; and Belgrave and Eaton Squares,—the Place Vendôme, and Place de Louis XV., of our new lords and old bankers.—*There* live the opulent and the ascendant,—the Dunbars and the Mardynvilles. *There* dines Hanton,—there flirts Mrs. Percy;—while my friend Lady Cecilia, more aristocratic in her predilections, clings to the sobereties of Grosvenor Square; whose ancient hall-chairs are polished, not by French varnish, but by much friction of generations of lacqueys, from the time when the link of Lady Mary Wortley’s chairman was trust into the extinguisher, still suspended over the entrance.

Then we have Carlton Gardens,—the Hesperides of Cabinet Ministers,—which shifts its occupants with every change of administration. Were the ghosts of Fox and Sheridan to arise from the Abbey in the mists of some November morning, how would they marvel to behold the classic ground of Carlton House devoted to the hubbub of conservative clubs, or the gorgeous vulgarity of such satraps as Sir Bungalore Hooghly and Co.!

Till within these fifteen years, however, the domestic architecture of London hobbled far behind the march of luxury. A handsome town residence was then a show-house;—bath-rooms, a gallery, and a little marble, and plate-glass, consti-

tuted a palace; and, lo! there are *now* squares—full of mansions fit for princes to be ruined in! Not an agent's book but contains a dozen attainable by the week or season, where you may live as Thelusson, or the Duchess of Gordon, sovereignized some forty years ago.

The immediate consequence of this diffusion of brick and mortar seems to be the evacuation of the city. Instead of the wealthy merchants, and great bankers, once resident in the vast, square, roomy mansions of its dark and narrow, lanes, I learn that not a merchant of eminence sleeps within sound of Bow Bell; and hence the difficulty of appropriately filling up those civic offices, formerly so eminent in their illustration. The commodious dwellings of the great capitalists have been converted into warehouses, or are inhabited by clerks! and the thinly populated city is twice as wholesome, and half as dignified. The Regent's Park, meanwhile, extends its stuccoed terraces;—and London seems to stretch its gigantic arms, and gape for air,—like some mighty monster, awaking from a trance.

It might afford me a useful lesson, that so many of my new visitors were, by the way, friends of my imprudent predecessors here, and fed on their undoing.

“Aha!” drawled little Mrs. Percy, on her first visit,—“I see you have got the Thistledown's love of a house,—the prettiest little toyshop in London.”

“Foolish people!—They *would* do things to which they had no pretension:—swam out of their depth, and sunk for ever.”

“Or rather, like the Flying Fish in the fable,” observed Penrhyn (who “happens” to drop in wherever her carriage is seen stopping), “they got out of their element, and were pecked to death by the birds, into whose nest they had intruded. People thought them silly and presuming, even when their silliness and presumption were upheld by a charming house, excellent establishment, and select dinner-parties; but when we found, that even *these* were assumption, no words can describe our indignation at their impertinence!

“Mrs. Thistledown had passed for a pretty woman, we now thought her a fright, and called her ‘*that* Mrs. Thistledown.’ He had been regarded as a frank well-natured man; we now decided him to be a tiger! What became of either we neither knew nor inquired. It was sufficiently horrible that we had been dining and supping with people not fairly entitled to give us dinners or suppers.”

“Indeed, I did inquire,” said Mrs. Percy, incapable of discerning between her friend's serious and ironical vein, “and I was told they were in prison. Of course, there was an end of the thing.”

“And there might as well have been an end of the people,”

said Penrhyn, laughing. "They are morally dead—defunct, to all intents and purposes. Let them sleep in peace."

"Particularly as we find dear Mrs. Delaval so satisfactorily established in their place," was Mrs. Percy's well-turned rejoinder.

But Mrs. Percy's heartlessness is by no means unique. Most of my new friends (and many among them should know better) have entered with a similar ejaculation.

"Ah! by the way, this is poor Thistledown's house. Didn't he die, or something of that sort? Ruined—Ah! very true!—I recollect now. He played—both hazard and the fool—and was done up before one had made up one's mind whether he was a man to be known. Howard was rash enough to put him up at White's; which was amazingly wrong of Howard, who has himself only one leg to stand upon."

"Now, do just look at those Dresden vases, and those Marqueterie consoles; and think of the absurdity of a fellow like Thistledown venturing on such fancies! A man with barely income enough for mahogany and Wedgwoodware, to presume to have a taste!"

"Well!—he has met with his *deserts*; and his *dinners* we all met with!" added a Jekylling.

"Just imagine that I sent cards here to the Thistledowns this season, quite forgetting they were done up!" drawled Lady Grace Gosling. "Had it not been for my good fortune in knowing Mrs. Delaval, and recognizing this little humming bird's nest of theirs, I should never have thought of them again."

Such is the worldliness of the world! Thus easily are broken those brittle ties of spun-glass, which one forms in the chance-medley of a season. People are true to their relations, and faithful to their friends; but how few make it a matter of principle to be true to their acquaintances! Formed by an exchange of courtesies and cards, on some accidental temptation (such as Lady A.'s desire to flirt with Lord B. at Lady C.'s ball, and Lady C.'s desire to have her ball adorned by the presence of Lady A.'s diamond necklace), London acquaintanceships barely survive their ephemeral day, unless revived by some further motive of expediency.

There seems to be a distinct profession sprung up of late years, which, for want of a better designation, I shall call acquaintance-brokerage. Certain dowagers of note undertake to patronise balls for acquaintanceless people; and go about, promising and vowing, in their name, that the music and supper shall be excellent. Many of these acquaintance-brokers perform their functions in all honesty; and simply give an agreeable fête to their own visiting list, at the house of a Colonel Crab or a Mrs. Brown, with a proviso that visiting cards shall be left for the Crab or the Brown on the following day.

Others exercise their functions with Judas-like treachery. "My dear Lady Laura, you *must* come on Thursday night to some new people in Hereford Street, whom I have promised to patronise;" or, "My dear duke, I have undertaken this ball in Hereford Street for the—What's their names? I am bored to death with the whole affair, and will positively never trouble myself with such a *corvée* again. But you will greatly oblige me by looking in for a minute or two." Sometimes they are less deferential towards their *protégés*; and the more exclusive dandies are persuaded to go and sup at No. 104, Harley Street, without a word of the name or nature of its proprietor. "I always bow to the diamond necklace nearest the door on entering, when I am invited in this way," said Sir Harry Andover to me, in describing the brokerage system,—"and take it for granted that I have made myself free of the house."

"A year or two ago," said Penrhyn, who sometimes plays the moralist, among his other parts of exquisite dissembling, "there came up from Wales some rich mine-people, who had a mind to push forward in society. A ball seemed their readiest mounting-stone, and a ball they determined to give, under the sponsorship of some Lady Ap Shenkin or other, the wife of a Welsh baronet neighbour. The company assembled by the lady of the leek, was of the kind called "highly respectable;"—brother baronets and sister baronetesses,—Portland Place directors and directresses,—admirals, generals, lord and lady chief justices, *et hoc genus omne*; most of them party-givers, as well as party-goers; and the new people were invited to some two hundred humdrum entertainments in exchange for their one. So far, so fair! But, among the admirals' wives, alas! was a Lady Lavinia Tarpaulin, who had sprit-sailed her way through a fashionable winter at Brighton; and, in the course of the evening, contrived to make it known to the acquaintance seekers, that *she* would have made their baronets, lords; and their ladies, ladies in waiting. Next year, accordingly, Lady Lavinia undertook their ball, and Lady Ap Shenkin was compelled to own to the hundred applicants for her interest to obtain a ticket, that *she* herself was omitted from the new list.

"How contemptible!

"Contemptible enough! but to reach half way up the ladder of parvenuism, serves only to dazzle and dizzy the unwary. The wings of our pretenders had now sprouted; the following year, Lady Lavinia heard of them as having been undertaken by a dowager duchess, and saw no more of them."

"And the dowager duchess?"

"Doubled them up, and laid them on the shelf. Their means had been just equal to the calibre of a Lady Ap Shenkin. To

merit the patronage of a Lady Lavinia, they engaged twice as good a house and establishment; and

Lo! two turtles smok'd upon the board!

But, for the level of her grace, a French cook and St. James's Square seemed indispensable; and that last campaign in London, sent them to Glamorganshire; lionized to utter extinction."

By the way, my friend, Lady Cis, is something of a mistress of the ceremonies. With respect to myself, as Sir Jenison is the head of Colonel Delaval's family, she could do no less than present me to her *clique*. But she is too apt to traffic in little notes of nothingness, using all the insinuations that satin paper and *phrases de caresse* can supply, to get Mrs. This invited to the duke's ball, and Lady That noticed by the duchess. On Wednesday mornings she is always in a nervous flutter of spirits, about a voucher for Miss Ellen, or a subscription for Lady Sophia. Mr. Penrhyn, indeed, declares—but I am not sure that *his* declarations would grace the pages of my journal.

Heigho! what an infinite deal of nothing have I already written down! In malice?—I hope not! It was my desire to comment upon things, rather than upon persons; or, if persons, those whose conversation was improving, and whose example edifying. Living as I have done, in what the Americans would call "the bush," I longed to form for myself a circle of enlightened men and women,—the makers, not the ingredients of society; people who, while they walk with the century, are able to give a guess at the century to come. But one of Lady Cecilia's first and most earnest interdictions was against entangling myself in a *bureau d'esprit*. Nothing, she protests, so dangerous! Lady —, it seems, has brought the thing into disrepute, by fawning on every creature that wears a quill; by which means, individuals have been introduced into society, whom it is as unsafe to know as to decline knowing.

"Pore over their books as much as you please, but do not so much as dip into the authors!" said she, when I proposed an introduction to one of the most popular writers of the day. "These people expend their spirit on their works; the part that walks through society, is a mere lump of clay,—like the refuse of the wine press after the wine has been expressed. In conversing with a clever author, you sometimes see a new idea brighten his eye, or create a smile round his lip; but for worlds he would not give it utterance. It belongs to his next work,—and is instantly booked in the ledger of his daily thoughts—value three and sixpence. The man's mind is his mine,—he can't afford to work it gratis, or give away the produce."

Armine and her husband are come at last!—The happiest

moment I have experienced in London, was that in which, for the first time these four years, I folded her in my arms.—Highly as I regard my brother-in-law, I should have been just as well pleased had Herbert allowed my first interview with my sister to be a *tête-à-tête*; but we shall meet every day for the next three months, and find plenty of opportunities to talk over things and people whom I could not frankly discuss in his presence; indeed, I was quite sufficiently taken up with examining his wife, and noting the progress of time in her dear familiar face. And how dear,—how *very* dear,—is a familiar face, beheld after long estrangement. They may talk of returning to the scenes of our youth,—the old mansion, the well-known orchard, the favourite hawthorn hedge,—but restore to *me* the sunny smile, the open countenance, the loving eyes of *her* who made those scenes delightful;—*there* is a positive happiness, worth worlds of poetry.

But, after all, is this possible?—The spring comes with its blossoms to the old orchard, and the genial month of May brightens up the fragrant hawthorn-hedge, as when first a sheet of snow-white blossoms was flung over its early verdure; while human life boasts but its single spring. After one brief summer, the face and feelings go out of bloom together; and who can bear to see the hollowing eye, the sallowing cheek, the contracting brow, we remember so bright with the impulses of youth?

But *I*, too, am growing poetical, and this my journal is solemnly pledged to matter of fact. Idylliumism apart—I was grieved to perceive that the cares of life had tarnished the beautiful face of my sister. Surely vanity does not mislead me into believing that, although a year younger than myself, she might pass for ten years my senior? Yet *I* have spent a life of disappointment and repining, while *she* is unconscious of a single sorrow. Have I less depth of feeling—less force of character, than my sister?—Perhaps so!—Perhaps she has grieved for *me*. Perhaps her regrets for the weary and unprofitable years I have been passing, have created a care for her?—But I forget!—Armine has four children; and experience has not initiated me into the pains and pleasures produced by the responsibility of motherhood.

The unfavourable change I noticed in Armine's looks, struck me still more forcibly in the manners of her husband. Herbert, although an excellent, is certainly not an ingratiating person. He is fond of naked truths, and I am modest enough to like even the truth a little *drapée*. Armine admired my house. Herbert was silent till she questioned him. “Is it not charming? Is it not a perfect *bijou*?”

“By *bijou*, I conclude you mean trinket?” he replied; “which perfectly explains my objection to it. Trinkets are not for daily use; and this house seems made for any thing

but to live in. I dare say I am wrong,—but I detest gim-racks."

"It was fitted up for your poor friend Thistledown," added Armine, apparently with a view to his conciliation.

"Was it?—I should have fancied it fitted up for an actress," replied Herbert, rising, and trying to look through the conservatory into the Park. "As *ass* as Thistledown was, I should have hardly thought him capable of spoiling a fine prospect like this, by planting it out with geraniums."

This is the first ungracious word I have heard respecting my pretty house; and, perhaps, the only sincere one! At all events, the thing might have been said more courteously. Some people are perpetually declaring—"I told him plainly;" as if any one had a right to tell another a thing "plainly!"—Better tell it "prettily," and the lesson is learned with patience.

Significant looks passed between Armine and her husband, at the mention of several persons I named, as my intimate associates. Had he not been there, she would have probably explained herself; but Herbert showed such a disposition to be uncivil, by observing, "All these are Lady Cecilia's people. *She*, I conclude, has been your bear-leader;" that my sister seemed afraid of provoking further comment. To-morrow, I shall manage to see her alone; and inquire her objections to the Percys, Penrhyn, Lady Grace Gosling, and others.

I was at Almack's to-night for the first time;—most brilliant!—most beautiful! I dined first with Cecilia, and sat next Hanton; who, between the courses, noticed that the *fraicheur* of my toilet was equal to that of the mullet,—a great compliment from him.

"You are going to a ball, eh?—Great Heaven! how can people *dérouter* themselves by going to balls?—Hot rooms—noisy music—dust—citric acid ices—and spurious champagne!—Your appetite nauseated next day, and your temples beating out of time like a blacksmith's anvil!—And Almack's too,—a *public* ball!—I look upon Almack's as the worst thing going."

My *gaieté de cœur* was not to be damped by his affectation; and when the clock struck eleven, I entered, on Cecilia's arm, that long and echoing ball-room, where so many hearts, promises, and fans, have been broken,—from the time of hoop petticoats and red-heeled pumps, to those of aérophane crape and patent varnish. The ball-room, without much elegance of architecture or decoration, is gay and well-lighted. It has been noticed, and I think truly, that there is not in London a room where beauty looks more beautiful. Nothing there to distract attention from the human face divine;—no pictures—no statues—no gilding—no porcelain—no flowers. You have pretty music to listen to, pretty faces to look at, and the best society, in the easiest and most agreeable way. Paris, Vienna,

Naples, have nothing to compare with Almack's: no *point de réunion*, where people are sure of meeting those suit them, and whom they suit. But then, in what capital does fashion hold a reign so absolute as in London? Where was the throne of exclusivism ever so firmly established as at Almack's?

The very fine complain that the thing is *en décadence* no longer the *Delhai Lama*-ish temple that it was

"In my cold youth, when George the Fourth was king. But no matter! It is still the conservatory, *par excellence* for our budding roses and rare exotics; the rendezvous seeing with the least possible trouble the greatest possible number of one's acquaintances.

What a host of hands were extended to me to-night to friends! what curtsies innumerable was I forced to perform in honour of new introductions! Lady Cecilia is of opinion as my house is not large enough to give a ball (a thing which amounts to a publication of one's visiting list), I may as well know every body, and go only to those whom I think desirable. An apology is easily sent to people one wishes to send to the ventry!

Among other merits, Almack's has the especial privilege of affording the only classic (ball) ground for ministerial and political celebrities. Lord North frowned there in his day; Lord Castlereagh (Holy-alliance Castlereagh), in his; and great men of to-day follow in the steps of those of yesterday. To-night we had——, looking sallow and saturnine, sentimental withal; and I am sure that his oratory is as touch as many hearts as heads.

Thursday morning.—Having had my horses out till nearly four, I shall not be able to get to Herberts' to day. If Armine can command her husband's arm, I hope she will be able to come to me.

Six o'clock, and my room only just clear of morning visitors! I am tired out with chit-chat,—buried under a shawl of rose-leaves! First came Lady Evelyn Beresford, all beauty and grace, who never speaks above a whisper, and of every breath of air, even in a westerly wind. She always has a *very* little cough—so small, that it seems like the voice of the invisible girl, to come out of another room: just now, poor Lady Evelyn

"Dies of a rose in Homœopathic pain;" dines at three o'clock, on half a snipe, and keeps her children in Lancashire, being too nervous to bear their noise within two hundred miles of her great rambling house in the Gardens. She comes to town for the season, only to put herself under the tortures of the newest fashionable quack: it is all amazement that any one can bear the fatigue of dreary

and the exhaustion of hot rooms. It is needless to remind her that her own *demie-toilette* costs her twice the trouble of our ball dresses, or that the thermometer in her boudoir stands at 85°. She has no faith in the indispositions of other women. Most of us experience a jealous pang on hearing the beauty of some rival lauded, apparently at our own expense; but Lady Evelyn is as tenacious of the word "invalid," as Mrs. Percy of the terms "wit" or "belle."

"They talk of the Duchess of — being delicate," said she, in an indignant tone, this morning; "a woman who has nursed all her children must have the constitution of an Irish charwoman!"

She will not even allow one of her friends to be ill,—hints that it is an idle pretension,—and has actually misgivings of imposition, after they are dead and gone.

Sir Jenison Delaval came in before she left me; who, being a constitutional croaker, a dear lover of bad tidings—(Lady Cis declares that, had he been sent for news out of the ark, he would have brought back a sprig of yew, instead of an olive-branch!) informed us that Lord Clendinning had lost his wife.

"Lady Clendinning dead?" cried Lady Evelyn. "Impossible! you must have been misinformed!"

"I fear not. She died last night."

"Last night?—oh dear, no. Mr. Beresford was with his father yesterday morning, just after Dr. Holland had left the house; and Holland gave it as his opinion that she was in no sort of danger. Holland is aware of her foible of fancying herself ten times worse than she really is."

"In this case, poor woman, her fancy was confirmed. She said she should not live through the day, and expired in the course of the evening."

"My dear Sir Jenison, believe me, it was some other person. Lady Clendinning is one of the last women in the world to die in that sort of way, of a common cold."

"But it was *not* a common cold—it was an inflammation of the lungs."

"Well! common or uncommon, I know she was at Devonshire House on Thursday week; and you may rely upon it she is no more dead than I am."

"It was precisely at Devonshire House that she had some difficulty in getting up her carriage,—stood in a draught of air without her cloak,—and never quitted her bed afterwards. Blisters, bleeding, leeches—nothing could save her."

"How very absurd! Lady Clendinning has a horror of blisters—never put one on in her life; and as to bleeding, the very sight of a lancet would cure her. I shall go and call on her to-morrow."

"Better not, my dear madam. You will find Clendinning ~~House~~ shut up. My information *must* be correct, for I had

it from Screw, the upholsterer, who is generally civil enough to let me know when he has some great funeral in hand."

"I dare say he was sent for to make an easy sofa or chair for her," persisted Lady Evelyn, "and fancied, as the knocker was tied up, that she *must* be dead."

"No such thing, I assure you," snarled Sir Jenison. "He was sent for to ——"

"I don't believe a word of it!" interrupted Lady Evelyn, having gradually raised her small sucking-dove voice to tornado pitch; "and I will go to Clendiffning House this very minute."

Before Sir Jenison had settled his wig and his temper, after her exit, "came there a certain lord," who asked permission last night to pay his respects to me in St. James's Place; and as he is young, handsome, and withal reputed agreeable, I made him one of those unmeaning affirmative shrugs, expressive of neither too much nor too little satisfaction at the proposal. Now that I have seen him again, and studied him at leisure, I heartily rejoice at not having been warmer in my acceptance of his civilities. Lord Lancaster seems to be an adept in that fashionable school of superciliousness which renders young Englishmen so ridiculous. Till the age of thirty, your listless lord takes refuge in finery from his own insignificance, —knows nobody, —goes nowhere, —can find nothing to eat, —nothing to read, —is very little aware of what you are saying to him, and still less of what he utters in reply. After thirty, unless improved by having amalgamated with reasonable society, he retreats anew into whatever may be the pet club of the day—White's, the Travellers', Crockford's, or a successor, still to arise. From that moment he knows nobody but the fellows at the club; goes nowhere but to the club; admits of no eating but the dinners or suppers of the club—no reading but its journals and periodicals. He meets a man in society, and if a member of the same, offers to *put him down* there; if not a member, but worthy so to be, he offers to *put him up* there. That goodly community he holds to constitute the human species; for *him* there is *no* world elsewhere!

Lord Lancaster is at present in the incipient stage of listlessness. At present, he knows nothing, and nobody, on the face of the created globe. He came into my drawing-room, evidently prepared for a *tête-à-tête*, and to make it agreeable to both parties; but the moment he saw Sir Jenison Delaval, a man with whom he has no visiting-acquaintance, he froze into a statue of snow, to make it evident, that an introduction to the stranger was out of the question. Instead of his florid eloquence of last night, he emitted only monosyllables in reply to the diffuse commentary on the weather, with which I was obliged to fill up the awkward pause that ensued; and, instead of his graceful ease on the satin sofa at Almack's

among those certified of his *caste* he turned his eyes neither to the right nor left, lest, peradventure, they should fall upon an object of dubious recognizability. So complete a man in buckram never was it my lot to see.

Before his lordship's joints could be unstiffened, or his dignity relaxed, by the departure of poor unconscious Sir Jenison, in rattled Count Szchazoklwonski, a wild Hungarian, and a great friend of Lady Cecilia, who has a propensity for tattling bad English.

"Ha! my friend, Sare Delafals!" cried he, "enchanted to met you. Receife your polite cart of dinner—will axcep, most happee. Who that stranshe mans?" whispered he, leaning towards me.

"Lord Lancaster," replied I, in the same low tone.

"Lancasters? do I not knew heem? an Irizh peer, eh, yees?"

"A Scotch one, I believe," said I, amused by his barbar-*esque* self-possession, under the scrutinizing glances of the exclusive.

"Scosh? aha! Scosh, I tink. Good day, milor, good day, your shervanth. You are of Scoshland, I find. I have great regard for Scoshland. I go to Scoshland, last sheason, shoot the inoors; leef on groushe and veeshky, veeshky and groushe; I have great regard for Scoshland. Pray, milor, can you told me vare I gets di genoing Scosh peel?"

"Peel?" reiterated his lordship.

"Count Szchazoklwonski probably means Scotch marmalade, made of orange-peel," said I, in perfect simplicity.

"I means no such tings," cried the count; "widsh your kind forgive me, I means *peel*,—Scosh *peel*,—veesh I took ven indishpose, in de moor; and veesh cure me like vonder!"

"Scotch *pills*," cried I, unable to repress a laugh.

But it was no laughing matter. The colour rose to Lord Lancaster's temples, and he pulled up his collar with a jerk, as he would have pulled up a hard-mouthed horse.

"Your friend seems to take me for an apothecary," said he, addressing me; but disdaining to notice the count.

"Million pardonsh, milor," replied Szchazoklwonski, amazed at having given offence: "miladi spoke you as peer of Scoshland; thought you very natural know de Scosh *peel*. Not de leash affronts in de worral."

It is impossible to describe the air of Lord Lancaster, conscious of having been made ridiculous, and apprehensive of rendering himself more so before "Sare Delafals;" for the count's apostrophe had taught him to know the uncouth man in the corner, not only for the mate of the fashionable Lady Cecilia, but actually for a member of his club; whom not to know argued himself, if not unknown, at least unknowing.

To-night I am going to the Duke of Merioneth's, dining

first with the Percys; so that I shall actually pass the second day of Armine's sojourn in town without seeing her. How mortifying!

Friday night.—I seem destined to meet *contrariétés*. This morning, I determined to sally forth across the Parks, to my sister, attended by my servant. But, just as I had reached the gate of the Green Park, a gentleman, who had been cantering gently along Constitution Hill, drew up, gave his horse to his groom, and I found myself escorted by Mr. Penrhyn.

"Am I indiscreet in inquiring whither Mrs. Delaval is bound at so unseasonable an hour?" said he. "Is it some nefevolent action that takes you abroad so early? I fear it is for Charity, we are told, begins at home! Perhaps Madam Payne has received her despatches from Herbault, and are one of the favoured few admitted to the privy council's modes? Or you are sitting for your picture?—Yes! you are sitting for your picture, and choose to arrive at Chaloner's door with the bloom of exercise upon your cheek!—I take for granted, Chalon is the man, as the only artist whose style is worthy of your own—

"Hair loosely flowing—robes as free."

"My intent is neither wicked nor charitable," said I; "it is my face about to borrow charms from either a painter or milliner. I am simply going to visit my sister, Mrs. Herbert, who is just arrived from the country."

"Ah! you have a sister? Not the wife, I trust, of a certain morose Henry Herbert, with whom I used to quarrel at Eaton and Christ-church?"

"A certain Henry Herbert, certainly, and both of Eton and Oxford; but by no means a morose one."

"My hearty congratulations, then, to his fair lady, on reformation she has effected! To do poor Herbert justice, he had some pretext for ill-humour. It has been his fate, through life, to come in second best. His father is an old baronet with a princely estate; but my friend was born eleven months after a stout, thriving, active, elder brother. Till ten years old, he was himself a handsome lad; caught the small-pox, and became honey-combed for life! His younger brother changed his name for a fortune, left him by a rich godmother, and his elder succeeded to the title and family property. He Herbert, I conclude, is still Henry Herbert; a man with a profession, because he is so near being a man of fortune, but who, with his independence of 1785*l.* per annum, is most dependent of human beings! What you have just told me, completes the catalogue of his misfortunes;—he is married to Mrs. Delaval's sister, instead of to herself!"

"He is, indeed, much to be pitied," said I, affecting to laugh off Mr. Penrhyn's compliment, as we reached the

f Armine's house, in New Norfolk Street ; " but, as another minute will bring me into the presence of your victim, you must permit me to wish you good morning."

" Victim, indeed !" ejaculated Penrhyn, raising his hat as he servant opened the door. " Herbert is even a more unhappy dog than I thought him ; to live in New Norfolk Street, and on the wrong side of the way !"

Certainly my brother-in-law's face *did* look most lugubrious when I entered the breakfast-room. The table was covered with cold tea, stiffened muffins, warm butter, tepid coffee, empty egg-shells ! The husband was grumbling over the denunciations of an opposition paper ; the wife trying to silence the chattering children, who prevented his croakings from becoming audible !

" Why, my dear Armine, did not Herbert bring you to see me yesterday ?" I inquired, as soon as I had taken my place.

" He thought it would be far easier for your carriage and horses to bring you to see *us*," replied Herbert, taking up his own defence.

" My horses and servants had been out all night."

" *Yourselves*, of course, remaining at home ?"

" No. If you remember, I told you I was going to Almack's, and last night, I was at Merioneth House."

" But people do not remain all night at Almack's ; and you (and your horses) were not at Merioneth House, I imagine, before ten o'clock ?"

" Not till eleven. But I was not sure of finding you, if I came in the evening."

" There were two good arguments that your sister, at least, would be at home. Like most recently arrived country cousins, she has nothing to wear ; and, like most poor men's wives, no horses to drive."

" Let us go to the drawing-room, and talk over your parties of last night," cried Armine, the peace-maker ; " it is enough that you are here at last."

And to the drawing room I followed her, leading one little stumbling girl, who did not choose to be carried, while *she* carried a heavy boy who did not choose to walk. But even the drawing-room was calculated to throw a damp on our spirits. Armine's arrival in town is so recent, that her house has not yet acquired an inhabited look. The lustres are in canvas bags ; the frames of the glasses and pictures under dirty gauze. The covers remain on the furniture ; with the exception of the table covers, which are doubled up and laid aside. No books about—no flowers—no knick-knacks—no any thing ! Nothing seems at home in the room but the poker, stuck familiarly into the sulky smoky fire.

" Ah ! this looks delightful," cried Herbert, shrugging his shoulders, after having opened another window to let out the smoke. " Nothing so charming as a fifth-rate London house,

to people who entertain the foolish ambition of deserting a comfortable residence, to come to town for the season."

"But you used to like London?" said I.

"Yes—when I had nothing else to like, and a club was my substitute for a home. But, with four children, and scarcely two thousand a-year, I am content to remain in Bedfordshire. Indeed, this will be decidedly the last year of our coming. Next season, I shall let this confounded smoky hole, and get three or four hundred pounds for it from some valetudinarian member, wanting to be near the Parks. By the way, what have you done with Penrhyn?—I saw him walk up to the door with you?"

"Then you also saw him turn away as I entered?"

"With no small satisfaction! I was afraid he might not be aware how little I am disposed to welcome such a visitor. I have known Penrhyn all my life, and disliked him as long; a man incapable of doing a generous thing, or saying a kind one. Penrhyn is by nature a dirty fellow. You know him to be rich, only because he is purse-proud; nay, he almost laments the prosperity which leaves him no excuse for being a *pique-assiette*. Although a man of family and high connexions, Penrhyn is as abject a tuft-hunter as if born a feather merchant in the Borough."

"He must have grievously incensed you," said I, laughing at his vehemence, "to induce you to take the trouble of uttering so violent a Philippic."

"Not he!—no one more insignificant in my eyes. At Eton he was an empty, sneering boy; at Oxford, a hanger on upon poor lords, who borrowed his bank notes—or dunce lords, who borrowed his reading,—or millionaire commoners, who borrowed the illustration of his aristocratic name: for Penrhyn is so accustomed to despise every thing, that he has no great opinion of himself; and, however good his position, cannot be satisfied without trying to hang himself a peg above it. Armine, my love, pray ring the bell for the nurse: Maria will certainly catch cold, running up and down the balcony.—No! pray, don't shut the window; we shall be stifled with smoke, or the child will cut herself, trying to fall through the glass."

A ring, a roar, a scolding,—and my little niece and nephew were despatched to the nursery. But the ill-humour of papa was a fixture. How few, how *very* few men understand the advantage of making themselves agreeable by their own fire side! I detest a husband eternally squabbling in a *tête-à-tête*, but becoming bright and sunshiny the moment a visiter is announced! My visit to my sister was rendered thoroughly unpleasant by Herbert's want of self-control. Yet, had he been in any house but his own, he would have suffered the chimney to smoke, the children to squall, and the breakfast table to look disorderly, without allowing his temper to be ruffled. I would not hear of his walking back with me to

St. James's Place ; and even allowed him to surmise that Mr. Penrhyn was waiting in the Park to offer me his arm. It was quite a relief to me, and, I fancy, to his wife, when, finding his services refused, he took himself off to his club.

After all, clubs are not altogether so bad a thing for family-men. They act as conductors to the storms usually hovering in the air. The man forced to remain at home, and vent his crossness on his wife and children, is a much worse animal to bear with than the man who grumbles his way to Pall-Mall, and, not daring to swear at the club servants, or knock about the club furniture, becomes socialized into decency. Nothing like the subordination exercised in a community of equals, for reducing a fiery temper. It is not the influence of the colonel or the major which curbs the violence of the irascible young ensign, so much as that of his brother ensign, who joined six months before him, and is already subdued to the discipline of the regiment. I dare say Herbert is tolerably amicable in his own neighbourhood, among 'squires of his own fortune and degree.

Luckily, there are times and places where all the world puts on its company face. At Merioneth Hcuse, last night, what a host of smilers ! Not a jealous scowl, not an envious sneer, not an angry frown, to be seen ! In spite of all the rivalship, all the vindictive feeling, pent up in the four hundred human breasts drawing breath under its gorgeous roof, all was courtesy, all kindness. Not a care presumed to show its face in that fairy palace. A temple of joy,—its votaries must be joyous. After an hour or two passed in such a spot, one might almost become a convert to the notion of the poor, that, in this world at least, Dives, in his purple and fine linen, is exempt from tribulation.

It is, perhaps, owing to the domestic plagues which subdued my temper, that I resided so many years at Delaval Castle, surrounded by mud hovels, without imagining that, because I was lady of all I surveyed, I was paramount in all other times and places. Nothing, I perceive, is so unpretending as a thoroughly Londonized person. There, gentlemen are accustomed to give way to lords ; lords to royalties ; and society is as nicely matched, each under each, as the voices of the bounds of Theseus. But divers of my fellow denizens of Ireland, and others escaped from long exile in the colonies, find it difficult to divest themselves of the influence of their local importance. The other night, at Almack's, I noticed Sir William O'Blarney, who has a family-place some miles from Ballyshumna, and was accounted a fine thing in Dublin, pushing and shoving in a crowd of peers and peeresses, as he would have done in a mob in Sackville Street ! He could not conceive why they did not make room for him, and his partner ; and fancied himself as grand and influential in the presence of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Grey, two or three

German princes, and two or three hundred of the leading nobility, as when receiving the obeisances of a dozen hatless and shoeless retainers, in whose eyes Sir William O'Blarney, own cousin, twice removed, to my Lord O'Blarney, of the fine ould ancient house of O'Blarney, of Blarney Castle, in the county of Fermanagh, is secondary in importance only to the Prince of Wales! To do poor Sir William justice, his partner, Lady Theodosia Farinafad, seemed quite as well inclined to assert her mistaken dignity as himself. I saw her plant herself before one of the fairest and gentlest of the Howards, who was forced to retreat, and find a place in another quadrille; and the disdainful air with which Sir William and herself surveyed, from force of habit, all and sundry in the room, was really amusing. At last, as they were elbowing their way together towards Lady Theodosia's chaperon, I saw the ridiculous couple stand aside, as if conscious of a superior presence, and doubted not that a member of the royal family had come in. I raised my glass; but lo! in lieu of a royal highness, saw nothing but a fat old dowager,—a quondam lady-lieutenant. Sir William, remembering how low he used to bow to her at the Castle, having resumed his former obsequiousness. Great as he was, he felt an ex-vice-queen to be greater. The minnows shrank in presence of what had been a Triton in their little eyes.

Lister was right in his assertion that travel is indispensable to liberalize the mind. After making the tour of Europe, Sir William O'Blarney will probably return to his country, a polished, open-minded, open-hearted man. But it will require many a rub to teach him the useful art of self-knowledge. One lesson was bestowed on him the other night. Lady Cecilia's sister, the somewhat exclusive marchioness of Clackmannan, sent for her carriage, and took away her beautiful daughter, Lady Alicia Spottiswode, the moment Sir William asked her to dance. "It is Alicia's first season," whispered Lady Cecilia, observing my suppressed smile; "*et il ne faut pas s'encanailler!*"

Do not let me seem to scandalize my Irish friends. I see nothing in London—no! not even at Merioneth House—superior to Lord and Lady Rossana, or their sons and daughters. But the Rossanas are people of the world; and have supported the reputation of their country for beauty and wit, at Paris, Rome, Naples, Vienna, and Berlin. It struck me last night, that Mr. Penrhyn was paying attention to the youngest and prettiest of the daughters. But I am satisfied that Lady Sophia has too much dignity of mind to accept a man universally stigmatized as the *cavaliere servente* of a married woman.

Poor Sir Jenison Delaval has just attained a crisis in his destiny, which makes the matrimonial yoke he has been wearing, till it has grown into his flesh, sit extremely uneasy. Clarence Delaval, his only son, who has turned out as wild as

"General invitations go for less than nothing, in my opinion," was his ungracious reply. "In proof of which, *I invite you* to dine here on Saturday the fourteenth of May, to meet a pleasant party, and eat a detestable dinner."

"Invite my sister to dinner at a week's date?" interrupted Armine. "On the contrary, pray ask her to dine with us, *en famille*, to-morrow!"

"Our specimen of a breakfast, *en famille*, this morning, proved, no doubt, very attractive?" said Herbert. "No, no! no family dinners for a fine lady like Mrs. Delaval, who cannot live without her Almack's and Merioneth House, and who keeps a *cordon bleu* of a *chef*, if I am to trust to the low bow I saw bestowed on her carriage yesterday, from Crockford's window, by George Hanton. A family dinner!—boiled soles and shrimp sauce, a fat leg of mutton, and *sallow* potatoes, peeled with a knife! Faugh!"

And, in spite of all I could urge, he held me engaged to dinner for the fourteenth. Now, though I should dearly like to dine with the Herberts alone, and chat with Armine after dinner, I have not the slightest inclination to derange them by preparations for a party. I perfectly remember in my aunt Margaret's establishment, the general disarrangement produced by the occasional ceremony of giving a dinner; besides which, I have been forced by his peremptory proposal, to put off a weekly standing engagement to the Delavals; where, on Saturdays, a party of parliamentary men always assembles. But, my penance was to be; and, to-day, at seven o'clock, I drove to New Norfolk Street. The moment I entered, I felt persuaded things would go wrong. The footman looked stiff and stupid in a new livery, as fine as yellow plush could make him; and the butler, as sulky as a country butler always looks under the temporary subjection of a *maître d'hôtel* hired for the day. Armine was not dressed when I arrived, and Herbert stood on the hearth-rug, swearing at her dilatoriness, and the overpowering perfume of some jonquils and heliotropes, with which she had ornamented the *jardinière*. His pettishness was soon silenced by the announcement of a Sir Dunstan Forbes, a tall, square-shouldered, fussy man, too huge of stature, and too loud of tone for so small a mansion; and, immediately afterwards, a thundering knock, and Armine hurried in, drawing on her gloves, just in time to receive Sir John and Lady Farrington; the lady, dazzling in a full-trimmed lilac satin gown, diamonds, and a wreath of roses! The sun shone brightly upon our finery and ill-humour; and every time the door was opened, came a powerful whiff of the unwholesome vapour of charcoal. Two other men dropped slowly in; but the remaining two, who were to make out our party of ten, not yet making their appearance, the children were asked for by Lady Farrington, a Bedfordshire neighbour of my sister, apparently well-versed in her family concerns. Herbert in-

terposed his interdiction, saying, that children before dinner were a bore. Armine looked nervous—Lady Farrington pleaded with affected earnestness; and, after ten minutes' disputing, the nursery bell was rung,—the children, evidently waiting the summons, in all their company finery, arrived and set up a quartett of roaring, or rather a glee—for Montresor, the eldest boy, ran boldly in and climbed on Lady Farrington's lilac satin knees; while poor dear Armine, after vainly endeavouring to pacify them, and eke the head nurse, who bridled with suppressed indignation, on hearing her master assert, that they were the worst managed brats in England, sentenced them to return to the place from whence they came.

Herbert, looking at his watch, proclaimed that it was half-past seven, and talked of ordering dinner. Armine pleaded that Lord Lancaster was always late; and that, from Spring Gardens to New Norfolk street was a vast distance for Lord Hampton. The Album was accordingly re-opened, and re-admired by those nearest the table; the "Keepsake," and the "Book of Beauty," were commented upon, according to individual tastes; and Sir Dunstan inquired of Sir John, whether he had been late at the house the preceding night, in order to prove to the two silent gentlemen in black, that they were in presence of honourable members.

Again there came a pause; and Sir Dunstan attacked Lady Farrington on the exhibition at Somerset House; *he* giving as his own the sturdy criticisms of the *Athenaeum*, and *she* replying in the flimsy of the *Court Magazine*. Herbert was growing flushed, when a carriage rattled to the door, and in came Lord Hampton, all bustle, fuss, and apology, affecting to pant for breath; shaking hands to the right and left, with the *émpressement* of a man who arrives too late; bowing impertinently low to the two strangers, as if to announce himself most affably resigned to make the acquaintance of the whole injured company.

"I have a thousand apologies to offer to Mrs. Herbert," spluttered his lordship, in an audible voice to her husband. "But the fact is, I uniformly dine at eight; and being fully persuaded that you had invited me at eight, I desired François to have my things ready for me at the usual hour. I was sauntering leisurely near the Mount Gate, at twenty minutes after seven, when, happening to meet Lancaster, he said, 'I thought you were to dine at Herbert's?' adding something about an early dinner, which absolutely startled me. He observed that you were very considerate to dine at such an hour, in order to enable us to see something of the *Norma*. Believe me, I was horror-struck!—took but three minutes and a quarter to reach Spring Gardens,—searched for your card—found it—gave myself five minutes to dress—waited only while my horses were putting to, and have now nothing left but to throw myself on Mrs. Herbert's good-nature."

This apology, which apology was none, was received with indulgence ; and the party, yawning and hungry, satisfied that Lord Lancaster intended to cut the affair altogether, fell upon him like cannibals, and were tearing him to pieces, when in he sauntered,—cool, undaunted, unapologizing,—bowing slightly to his hosts, saluting Lord Hampton with a glance, and totally unconscious of the presence of any other person. A dead silence ensued ; during which he glided across the room to make the inquiry *d'usage* of my sister. “Have you been out this morning ?—Lovely day !—exquisite weather !” while we all waited impatiently the announcement of dinner. But, as it may usually be observed in such cases, the dinner that has been kept waiting, in the end causes others to wait ; and more than a quarter of an hour elapsed before we found ourselves wedging our way down to the dining-room, while little Horace Herbert was roaring his up to the nursery. I heard his father making good-natured remarks to Lady Farrington, who was leaning on his arm ; while I followed, on that of Lord Hampton, into a dining-room overheated with Carcel lamps, lighted and smoking for the last two hours. In the act of sending away his scarcely tasted soup, Lord Lancaster, affecting to perceive me, made me a formal bend of recognition, while I swallowed in uneasy silence my cold turbot and warm cucumber.

At three out of every six of even the best dinners given in London, the company is ill-assorted, and the party dull. But, when damped by a really indifferent dinner, nothing can be more unsocial than such a meeting. Sir John and Lady Farrington talked Bedfordshire with Armine and Herbert, which, to all the rest of the party was Hebrew and Greek ; Lancaster and Hampton talked club to each other across the table,—a dialect equally mysterious to the uninitiated ; the two silent gentlemen grew absolutely dumb during the process of mastication ; and Sir Dunstan, by whom I was seated, bored me by a series of fretful animadversions on the evils of the age,—abusing the post office,—reform bill,—macadamization,—public places,—private society,—men and things,—women and books ; and at every new topic of dissertation, ending by protesting that if the thing went on, he would certainly write a letter to the *Times*.

“Any news from Hollybridge ?” inquired Sir John, addressing my brother-in-law.

“Nothing important. I had a letter from Thoms yesterday. They want rain. By the way, Thoms mentioned that Denis, (Lord Forcefig's head-keeper) had been over to our friend Smith, about a warrant for the people in Broomby Bottom. It seems they have now some grounds to go upon. Still I hope Smith will be cautious. Smith is apt to let his sportsmanlike feelings run away with him. That affair about the

Oakley keepers did him a great deal of injury in the county. I trust Smith will be cautious."

"Did Thoms say, whether anything was settled about slating the almshouses at Dudley? My man Robson was up last week on business at Smithfield; and he told me, that at the last meeting nothing was decided; adding (between ourselves) that every thing in that quarter was likely to remain at sixes and sevens till we were back again. Smith is a sad potterer, unless on matters connected with the sporting interest."

"Were you late last night?" inquired Lord Lancaster of Lord Hampton, in a cross fire.

"About three! I stayed out another rubber."

"It was going hard against you when I left. The admiral was getting fussy. I heard him call for a glass of Madeira."

"He lost sixteen points of five; and the night before, a couple of hundred against Hilton."

"He had better pull up. The admiral's play is worse than anything, except his luck."

"Have you heard that he has promised to put up Taffrail?"

"He had better let it alone. Taffrail was with our squadron at Cherbourg last summer. We know him. It won't do."

"He was black-balled three times last winter at Paris."

"That argues nothing. The Carlist *clique* black-ball all the English upon principle. They have thrown over some of the best fellows in town; and show no mercy to younger brothers like Taffrail. A low bow from Rothschild would have been his only guarantee."

"You were at the Opera, madam, on Saturday?" said Sir Dunstan, addressing me, meanwhile, with stately condescension;—to which inquiry I bowed an affirmative. "In that case, I trust you participated in the indignation I could scarcely repress at finding the last act of the *Gazza Ladra* substituted for the first act of the *Semiramide*. Who is to rely upon the veracity of the bills, if such abuses are tolerated? An individual pays his money for a ticket, upon the faith of the announcement, expecting to see the first act of the *Semiramide*: they give him the last act of the *Gazza Ladra*? He has, perhaps, seen it before—perhaps repeatedly, and to satiety. Yet to this abuse the public are required tamely to submit! I fairly warn Monsieur Laporte, that, should he again presume to trifle in a similar manner with the forbearance of his subscribers, I will write a letter to the *Times*."

And this is rational conversation!—Heigho! heigho! heigho!—Miss Austin observes, in one of the best of her admirable novels, that "when lovely woman stoops to be disagreeable," the only art her guilt to cover is, like the lovely woman who stoops to folly, "*to die!*" Yet, what multitudes stoop to be disagreeable!—How many of those who are sulking with the world, from finding themselves less important,

less beautiful, less lauded than they could wish, take refuge in the morasses of disagreeableness!—some looking prudish—some consequential—some pharisaical—some blue,—in the mistaken view of magnifying their nothingness. So that their presence do but impose upon the timid, the ignorant, and the weak, they are content. They forget that the world repays itself during their absence;—that they must sometimes depart this city, and, at last, this life; and that, if the ass avenged itself by spurning the dead lion, still more ignominiously are its hoofs applied upon a defunct asinine brother, equipped in a lion's skin!

Last night, at Mrs. Percy's, "Sare Delafals" brought in tidings, that Lady Kirkby was no more. Lady Kirkby, it seems, was once a beauty and a wit,—an heiress in her youth, a countess in her middle age. Yet she lived without a friend, and died without a mourner; for *she*, alas! had stopped to be disagreeable. As a beauty, she was envious; as a wit, spiteful; as an heiress, selfish; as a countess, insolent. To secure her supremacy in the fashionable world, she had dropped her own relations; and at length, infirm and wrinkled before her time, by incessant wear and tear of temper, the world made mouths at her distresses. Her daughters disappointed her, by remaining single; her sons thwarted her inclination, by marrying according to theirs. Vexed by her own family, she looked abroad for consolation; hired a professional toady, and gathered a whole batch of *protégées* under her wings. But even Toady and the Protected at last rebelled. Lady Kirkby's friendship was dreaded almost as much as her animosity; she harassed her allies scarcely less than her enemies. She was fine, she was nervous, she was susceptible,—she was, in short, eminently disagreeable; and now that she is dead and gone, the two thousand tongues, so long kept still, per force of Terror, are wagging against her, as if to make up for loss of time. Warning! warning! warning!

To-morrow there is a Drawing-room, at which I am to be presented by the Marchioness of Clackmannon. I waited till Armine's arrival in town, hoping that Herbert would permit her to accompany me; but he protests, that poor men's wives have no business at Court; and Armine, with her usual gentle habit of accepting his opinions, assures me she is afraid of the heat.

A female Court must certainly be highly advantageous to the interests of commerce. What an infinity of trivialities must be accomplished, in order to send one in good style to the drawing-room. My neighbours, the Ronshams, seem in a panic of agitation. The old horses have been crammed with beans; the old coach (and coachman, too, I fancy,) re-varnished; the old hammercloth re-fringed,—seeing that there was no time for more extensive preparations, and while waiting, this morning, full-dressed in my white satin and plumes, the

summons of Lady Clackmannan, I had the amusement of seeing the Mamma Ronsham in pompadour and gold, looped up here, and flounced down there, bundled into the carriage, by her spouse, in his yeomanry uniform, looking vastly like Major Sturgeon; while the young ladies followed, in pink and silver, their elbows red by nature,—their ears and noses, by the effort of bringing to the hooks and eyes of ill-fitting gowns. Better have powdered them after the fashion of their two be-dizened footmen, whose heads exhibited a bushel of flour,—whose canes exceeded, in length, the djereed of a Persian warrior,—and whose bouquets must have deprived Covent Garden of its last polyanthus.

After all, magnificence is a tawdry thing, when viewed under the searching blaze of sunshine. Jewels lack lustre,—gold appears mere tinsel,—the circumstantialities of dress are too much seen to admit of any general effect; and even beauty's self becomes less beautiful. The exposure of the person imparts a meretricious air,—the complexion becomes moistened by the stifling atmosphere of the crowded rooms. As to ladies of a certain age, let them, above all things, avoid the drawing-room:—such a revelation of wrinkles, moles, beards, rouge, pearl-powder, pencilled eye-brows, false hair, and false teeth, as were brought to light, I could scarcely have imagined. Many faces, which I had thought lovely at Almack's, grew hideous when exposed to the tell-tale brightness of the meridian sun: the consciousness of which degeneration rendered them anxious, fretful, and doubly frightful. Two or three dowagers, with mouths full of gold wire, chinstays of blond to conceal their withered deficiencies, and *tulle illusion* tippets, were really horrific; painted sepulchres,—ghastly satires upon the hollowness of human splendour.

In general the men suffered less by exposure than the women. In these times, so many uniforms are worn, and a well-padded, well-buckrammed uniform goes so far towards the manufacture of a manly-looking man, that I had no fault to find, except with a few quizzes, much resembling that model for courtiers,—Lord Grizzle, in Tom Thumb. Mr. Penrhyn had a certain *faux air* of Sir Charles Grandison, which rather took my fancy; and young Clarence Delaval in the hussar dress of the Duke of Merioneth's yeomanry cavalry, was really perfect. Lady Alicia and Clarence would make a charming couple!

A more charming couple still were Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville,—so fussy about arriving in time, and having their names legibly written, and getting forward before their Majesties were too tired to distinguish them, and being prominently noticed by every member of the Royal Family. I stood near them, after we had passed the Presence Chamber; and they would not let me off a single bow. "His Majesty observed to me, with the greatest condescension, 'Sir Robert,

I am glad to see you ;' and the Queen inquired, most affably, of Lady Mardynville, after our young people. The Duke of Cumberland, as you may have noticed, nodded to me as I passed him,—the Duke of Sussex bowed. The Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria smiled ; as much as to say, " Ah ! Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville," and Princess Augusta inquired of her ladyship how long we had been in town. Princess Sophia, of Gloucester, treats us quite as friends ; Lady Mardynville has a private audience of her royal highness once or twice in the course of the season. In short, it is not every one who can boast of being received as *we* have been. There is some satisfaction in paying our respects to the royal family, when we know, that our absence would be noticed, and that our attendance is appreciated."

For *my* part I was too much confused during my presentation to take much heed of what had occurred ; not on account of the examination of the royal family, who exhibit the graciousness and indulgence of high-breeding ; but because the malicious face of Lady Lancaster was prying from behind the Queen ; while her son, who was in waiting, stared me out of countenance. His supercilious nonchalance was quite as insupportable as while enduring the martyrdom of the bad dinner in New Norfolk Street.

Having no claim to aspire to the hospitalities of the King and Queen, I have only to regard the drawing-room as one of the best parties in town ; and though, of necessity, far from a select assemblage, comprehending more than any other the nobility and opulence of the kingdom. Many attend, out of respect for the throne ; many more, out of respect to their own position in society ; and the remainder, perhaps, to exhibit their diamond necklaces and state liveries.

I have often heard it asserted that an English girl, with the early bloom of girlishness on her cheek, is the prettiest creature in the world ; and have thence concluded that a drawing-room, where so many of these rosebuds are brought forward to exhibit their first expansion, must present a most interesting spectacle. This morning I particularly noticed the *demoiselles* to be presented ; and the ghastliness of the ladies of a certain age was scarcely less repulsive than the *naisserie* of several of these budding beauties. Nothing but a young calf is so awkward as a girl fresh from the school-room, with the exhortations of the governess against forwardness and conceit still echoing in her ears ; knowing no one—understanding nothing—afraid to sit, to stand, to speak, to look,—always in a nervous ague of self-misgiving. The blushing, terrified, clumsy girls, I noticed yesterday, will soon refine into elegant women ; but what will then become of the delicacy of their complexion and the simplicity of their demeanour ?

I am not one of those who cannot dispense with the case-hardened air of fashion, which strips the cheek of its blushes,

and the eyelid of its downcast veiling. The *dureté* of expression produced by long exposure to the stare of society, the worldliness stamped upon the brow, are, to *me*, fearful indications; and one of the charms which distinguishes my cousin, Lady Cecilia, from those of her caste, is a peculiar, whimsical, playful, *un-naïve naïveté*, incompatible with the defying air of what is called Fashion.

And what, after all, *is* called Fashion? Ten thousand various things, by ten thousand various people! Rank is positive, wealth positive; but Fashion is an airy nothing, which obtains a name and local habitation, according to the fancy of the tribunal sitting in judgment. Provincial people, speaking of their country races, observe, "We had all the *fashion* of the neighbourhood: the duchess and her daughters, Lord So and So and his sons;" evidently mistaking mere nobility for fashion. London people, of the second class, talk in the same strain, of "having met Mrs. Bullion and Mrs. Omnim," or other notabilities of the Bank-stock aristocracy with quantities of their *fashionable* friends at Hastings or Brighton." While the world,—the peremptory world of the two thousand, applies the designation of fashion exclusively to that precarious and uncertain distinction which, for a moment, concentrates the favour of its caste upon certain things, or certain persons; individuals deficient in birth, fortune, morals, and understanding, have sometimes been eminently the fashion; and, as such, preferred before the great or good; have been invited everywhere, courted, caressed, till they attained an air of self-possession—of satisfaction in themselves and the world—conventionally termed an air of fashion.

Nothing, however, is so unaccountable as the generation and progress of this gaseous vapour! Like the malaria or the cholera, it rageth where it listeth; and whether infectious, or contagious, or spontaneous, or what not, no man can tell. It is as little to be commanded or controlled as the winds of heaven; and is more talked about, and as little understood, as political economy, or the metempsychosis.

A curious example was afforded me the other night, by Lady Cecilia, of the capricious nature of this butterfly goddess, whose frivolous worship seems to form the darling idolatry of London. Opposite to us, at the opera, but on a higher tier, is a small and inconvenient box, in which I have been accustomed to notice the comings and goings of all the "fashionable" men about town; that is, the men of rank and fortune, distinguished, furthermore, by the ennobling touch of the tinsel wand. One crimson curtain of the box is always just sufficiently advanced to conceal the person seated behind its folds; and, had it not been for the occasional extension of an arm with an exquisitely fitting white glove, beating time with a glittering fan, I might have been permitted to surmise, that a bishop, or a lord chancellor, enjoyed silly, in that recondite-

retreat, the terrestrial harmonies of Mozart or Rossini. But, its inmate thus proved to be a woman, I had only to conclude that she was one of those more sinning than sinned against, concerning whom questions must not be asked by lips polite.

"Last Saturday, however, I was startled by Lady Cecilia's observation of, "Ah! Mrs. Crowhurst is in the duke's box, I see, which explains why her little boudoir of fashion, yonder, is deserted to-night."

"Mrs. Crowhurst?" said I; and, following the direction of her glass to the ducal box to which she alluded, I found it fixed upon a tall, fair, handsome, and strikingly "fashionable-looking" woman.

"How abominable of the duke, whose sisters and cousins are often seen in that box, to allow such a person to enter it!" I exclaimed, in a fit of virtuous indignation.

"Such a person?"

"Such a person as that Mrs. Crowhurst."

"My dear love, she is not *that* Mrs. Crowhurst; she is *the* Mrs. Crowhurst. What have you to urge against her?"

"Nothing! for, till this moment, I never heard her name; but I have always concluded——"

"Fie, fie! where have you lived, my dear, not to have heard of Mrs. Crowhurst?"

"Seven years at Delaval Castle, and seventeen in a cottage in Staffordshire, since you oblige me to plead my cause," said I, laughing. "But, instead of deriding, pray, enlighten my ignorance."

"And you really never heard of Mrs. Crowhurst? *Vous êtes d'une ignorance crasse*, as the French say of those who know twice as much as themselves! Mrs. Crowhurst is, as you see, a handsome woman; she is, as the peerage will tell you, well born; and, as I can tell you, clever and agreeable. Yet, when she first descended upon this most capricious of cities, no one cared for her—she did not get on—she was not the fashion. Some thought her too tall, some too fair, some too lively, some too frivolous—all too something. Almack's turned up its nose at her; and, under such contumelious treatment, most women, ejected from the highest sphere, would have taken to starring it in a lower. But the Crowhurst (let us do her justice!) had a taste for good society; and, after secretly analyzing the nature of the supercilious men and women by whom she was judged unworthy notice, determined on a *coup d'état*. She made herself talked about, grew affected, lost her character, and—became the fashion! I, and other fools, immediately set about inquiring, 'Who is this Mrs. Crowhurst, concerning whom there is such a scandal with Lord Alfred? Not the Mrs. Crowhurst I met down at Clackmannan Court?—Well! I had not the least idea there was any thing attractive in that woman!—and so began to discover merits in her errors. By degrees she became the

rage ; nay, she is still the height of the fashion. But if all the world believed her, as *I* do, to be, in reality, well-conducted, it would be puzzled to assign any motive for her sudden popularity."

" You are giving me a terrible lesson," said *I*, laughing.
" What a frightful road to fashionable favour ! "

" By no means ! Your position and hers are essentially different. Were a breath of scandal to blow upon *you*, you were lost. *You*, free, independent, able to marry where you please, have no possible apology for indiscretion. Even flirting is forbidden to a widow. That which passes for flirtation in a girl of seventeen, becomes coquetry in a *belle veuve* ; and, should she raise expectations which she afterwards refuses to gratify with her hand, she is termed, in plainest English, a *jilt* ;—for *she* must have coquetted with *malice prepense*. You, my dear cousin, my dear *friend*, must take some wiser mode of becoming the fashion ; luckily, you have only *l'embarras du choix*."

I was pleased by Cecilia's little lesson, for I saw she was in earnest. With all her *légèreté*, it would deeply grieve her, were *my* conduct to provoke a disparaging comment. Towards her niece, lady Alicia, she maintains the same severity ; and, in presence of our lovely young friend, is twice as guarded in every sentiment and expression as in conversing with others. Had she been blessed with daughters of her own, I am persuaded they would have been admirably educated (*i. e.* for women of fashion !) It is a mistaken prejudice which decides a man against marriage with the daughter of one whose early years are supposed to have been years of error. Such a woman is rigorous, above all others, in watchfulness over her child ; whereas women like Lady Clackmannan, whose conduct through life has been irreproachable, and who have basked in the sunny side of society, are apt to fancy virtue a thing of descent, or matter of course, leaving it to be inculcated by the governess, with geography and the use of the globes.

—Interrupted by a tiresome morning visit ! How could even a woman so misjudging as Lady Farrington imagine that, because, at Armine's desire, I sent her my card, I entertained any desire to listen to her most prosaic prose for three long quarters of an hour ! For the first ten minute of her visit, I was deceived into thinking her charming ; for she talked only of my sister, and of my sister only with praise. " As dear Mrs. Herbert's nearest neighbour in the country, *she* had such opportunities of admiring her sweetness of temper, her depth of judgment, her softness of disposition ! Mrs. Herbert was her standard of perfection. She knew not such a wife, such a mother, such a mistress, such a friend. No one could properly estimate Mrs. Herbert but those who resided in her own neighbourhood, and saw her, young and pretty as she was, devote her time to

clothe the hungry and feed the naked—(she begged my pardon, she meant clothe the naked and feed the hungry)—could do justice to her virtues. Nothing so unselfish, nothing so amiable as Mrs. Herbert!"

Must I not have had a heart of adamant to resist this well-merited eulogy of my dear sister? I began to discover that, if not an elegant, Lady Farrington was a warm-hearted, sensible woman. What mattered her over-fine gown and tawdry bonnet, since she knew how to render justice to Armine! But a falling off soon followed.

"She had so long wished to make my acquaintance! Mrs. Herbert had talked me over with her so often; she seemed to know me as well, and to be as *au fait* of my affairs, as if we had been friends from childhood. She knew, in fact, more of me than I could suppose." And, in uttering the hint, she assumed a significant smile, which, were I less acquainted with my sister's delicacy, would have led me to suppose that Armine had really been betraying my confidences to a stranger!

But Lady Farrington soon disclosed herself. Perceiving how favourable an impression she had made by her rhapsodies concerning "dear Mrs. Herbert," she proceeded to panegy-
rize the husband with equal fervour. "She did not know what they should do in Bedfordshire without dear Mr. Herbert: Mr. Herbert was such a good neighbour, such an agreeable companion, such an active magistrate, such a sensible man;—such an excellent husband, such a kind father, such a valuable friend, such an indulgent landlord, such a liberal patron. Mr. Herbert had done wonders in improving the breed of cattle in his parish, and the roads in his district. But, above all, which was a great comfort to herself and Sir John, Mr. Herbert was of the right side in politics."

I longed to inquire the whereabouts of the right side of a circle; but was apprehensive of doing or saying any thing to prolong her visit. I had really no patience to hear my cross, arbitrary brother-in-law so overlauded. Luckily, she came prepared to eulogize all and sundry unto myself appertaining; and, having now praised my sister, her husband, and children, my house, my furniture, and even Azim, who was dozing on the rug, she considered my very neighbours entitled to their share of commendation.

"She had the pleasure of knowing the Gresham Ronshams;—charming family,—so agreeable, so accomplished, so much people of the world! Daughters pretty,—sons handsome,—parents highly intellectual. She had heard a great deal of me from the Gresham Ronshams."

I assured her, as civilly as I could, that I had not the honour of their acquaintance.

"No! she was aware of that. But they heard me singing, through the wall, and heard my little dog bark, and often fancied they could even distinguish my voice. Then they saw

me go out in the carriage (they were quite in love with my carriage!) and come home on horseback (the girls thought my mare the handsomest in London). In short, they were extremely interested in all my pursuits!"

I had no time to retort upon my neighbours; for, just then, Mr. Penrhyn made his appearance; and I have no doubt Lady Farrington has by this time called upon the Herberts, to ascertain the name of the tall, dark gentleman, so very intimate with dear Mrs. Delaval, that even her lapdog jumps on his knees without invitation!

To-day, I have determined to dine and pass the evening at home, alone; for to-morrow I must be dressed by eleven o'clock, to be ready for Epsom; then return to dinner at Lady Clackmannan's; and at night, two balls!—What a laborious day of pleasure!

Ten o'clock.—Heigho! only four hours alone, and obliged to take to my journal for society! Intending to read away the evening, I fancied Ebers had amply provided me with the *de quois*; but how few new books will bear being read in the midst of the excitements of the season! If grave, that which passed last night in the House, and was discussed this morning in the *Times*, is ten times more important;—if light, all that I heard on Wednesday at Almack's, all that I saw this morning in the Park, ten times more amusing.

Since I came to town, several women have been shown me in society as the *femmes auteurs* of the day; and, with Edgeworth and Burney, De Stael, De Souza, and Cottin in my memory, I rashly sent for a whole library of their works. What an ocean of milk and water! False sentiment, tawdry style, and a total absence of either sense or sensibility!

Even of the professional writers, how few possess the art of of arresting attention, amid the tumults of the busy world, as Scott and Byron used to do, when I sat from midnight till day-dawn, engrossed by their last new works. I don't care about * * * *. Before I open his book, I know that it will be bright, pure, polished, correct; but it is Carrara marble, employed in the manufacture of an elegant chimney-piece, not in the composition of a breathing piece of sculpture. I don't care for * * * —his heroes are wooden, his stories lumbering; or for * * * *, whose soul seems always star-seeking in the celestial spheres. Of living poets, Wordsworth, the inspired, writes no longer; Moore writes prose, and Campbell travels; and of travels, I have vowed a vow to read no more, till they come to be written by cherubim, having only heads and wings. A traveller with an appetite, is as great a nuisance as Dando; and Fanny Kemble's hot suppers are almost as bad as Mrs. Trollope's 'cuteness'. India, by the way, is the only land really fortunate in its tourists.—Heber, Jacquemont, Mundy, Miss Roberts; while, as to poor America, since the conquest of Peru, no country was ever so barbarously harassed by

foreigners. Were it not by a few biographies, and the little green-paper-covered common-sensical volumes of miscellanies, put forth in edification of the dunces of the rising generation, we, of the generation *risen*, should rarely find a new book to occupy our attention of an idle evening.

Now I am in process of commination, I must take leave to denounce a few things more. The little pictures, and little prints, and little poems, and little ballads of the day, are my utter abhorrence. A sickliness is beginning to degrade our taste in the arts, which cries aloud for reformation. All is namby-pamby, all Tilburina in white satin, all H *** B ***, all Paris, all fiddle-faddle! Every artist, poet, painter, or musician, seizes some spun-sugar idea, wraps it up in snipped paper, with a pretty little motto, as a pretty *cadeau* for pretty little ladies. When shall we again erect our worship to the noble, the stern, the simple, the vast? When will savage Rosa dash, or learned Poussin draw? When will Haydn or Handel revive—a Vandyke impart meaning to the human face divine—a Goldsmith or an Inchbald cheat one of genuine tears—or a Hogarth preach upon canvass a moral worth a thousand homilies? So weary am I of the embroidered-cambric-handkerchief school, that the sight of a table covered with tabbyfied Annuals, is to me more nauseating than an apothecary's shop. The Fine Arts, viewed through the wrong end of the telescope, can be made as *infiniment petits* as any thing else; and an eternal diamond edition of the human understanding wearies the mind, as much as the eyes. Ah! here is a volume of "Poems, by the Howitts," and I am secure of a pleasant and profitable hour.

May 25th.—Four days since I wrote a line; what infidelity to my Diary!—and now the pen is in my hands, I feel too idle and good-for-nothing to bid it speed. To exhilarate the spirits, amusement, like champagne, should be taken in moderate quantities: excess renders one stupid. Epsom,—balls,—two delightful dinners, and a *petit souper* at Merioneth House last night, after the opera; yet, to-day, to borrow the comparison of Beatrice, I am as dull as a great thaw. The truth is, that the society of Lady Clackmannan and her daughter is extremely wearying; the former, because she excites one too much,—the latter, too little. Lady Clackmannan is full of fire and intelligence; subdued, indeed, by the high breeding of exclusivism; but your attention is not kept the less painfully on the stretch, because her eloquence is couched in a voice as low in tone as one of Breguet's dumb repeaters; nor does her glittering eye hold you less potently enthralled, because it is one that fixes only her intimates, and never wanders over the crowd. To pass a day with her is looking on a piece of intricate clock-work; you feel sure that, while the automaton performs its functions with measure and deliberation, wheel within wheel, and flyer upon flyer, are

labouring *prestissimo* within. As to Lady Alicia, her childish simplicity is a perpetual gather of primroses—an insipid scentless flower, not worth stooping for!

I wonder who was the rather sallow-looking, silent, but certainly distinguished man whom George Hanton brought with him to help us through our sandwiches at Epsom, and whom 'Lady Clackmannan' appeared so anxious to engross? While she engaged him in an eager conversation on *her* side the carriage, Hanton whispered to me, with a glance at our small silver sandwich-box and bottle of sherry, "If one were not afraid to be seen in their society, there are people to be found at Epsom, who, instead of coming to see their bets decided, with a sandwich or two in the carriage, to avoid being *too* hungry for dinner, make a regular party of pleasure of the Derby, and bring down huge baskets from Gunter's;—*pâtés de volaille* and iced champagne,—quite a *dîner de campagne*. To see them gormandizing in some of the carriages, you would suppose a famine at hand. I am convinced certain persons come to Epsom only to eat!"—And, having swallowed the remaining anchovy sandwich in the box, away went Mr. Hanton; and I actually saw him afterwards talking to the Ronsham Greshams, and devouring a plateful of tongue and chicken on the step of the family coach.

Epsom certainly presents a brilliant spectacle. Such an effusion of animal spirits in man and beast—such movement—such excitement! Every one eager to be the last seen in town, and the soonest on the course; running the seventeen miles as if it were a heat. Then so many pretty dresses—so many pretty women, combined with fresh air, sunshine, and the sudden outburst into the country from the thraldom of town, render the day of the Derby an universal fête. The money to be made,—the money to be lost,—not only on the event of the race, but by the use and abuse of horses and carriages, finery and feeding, sets all the world in motion. The widely spreading course, variegated with colours of every hue,—the sight of joyous faces,—the sound of

Ladies' laughter coming through the air;

the freshness of the crushed grass,—the springiness of the whole scene,—fill one with cheerful thoughts. Above all, the rare assemblage of fine horses, which start with the fine gentlemen (placing the fine gentlemen, in sporting term, *second*), to meet the running horses at Tottenham Corner! Altogether, what an air of prosperity,—what excess of luxury,—and what a contrast to the state of things I have, of late years, been compelled to witness! Yet, if the truth were told, there is six times as much spirit of enjoyment in the ragged regiment of spectators, gracing similar scenes, in Ireland; and if they sometimes close in strife and disorder, it is that the contrast afforded by such rare occasions of diversion

to the humiliations of daily life, proves too exciting for the reason of the unreasoning.

I wonder whether foreigners are as much impressed as I was by the *coup d'œil* of the Epsom course. No other occasion presents the English populace (aristocratic and plebeian) to their view, under so vivacious an aspect; thrice vivacious to me, who, for so many years, have inhabited a half-populated district, and written myself down, an *ennuyée*.

It was odd enough, by the way, that Lady Clackmannan should not introduce to me her sallow friend; for she has been kind enough to present me to her whole acquaintance. But this one man, whom, by her manner of addressing him, she evidently values, she keeps to herself. I saw him again, for a moment, at Lady Bruce's ball, looking, as before, dry and discontented, though courted by all the finest of the fine ladies; and he was opposite to me at supper at Merioneth House, where it was impossible to inquire his name, as he must have overheard the question. Lady Maria De Rawdon sat next him, flirting in her usual detestable style; and I fancied he looked as disgusted with *her* as unconscious of me. Why should one feel offended when a stranger passes several hours in close propinquity, without honouring one with a smile, a word, or even a look? Those were good old-fashioned times when people had an excuse for at least a civil gesture to their neighbours at table, in helping the dish before them, or inviting them to take wine.

Sir Jenison Delaval, who has just called, cannot assist my conjectures concerning Lady Clackmannan's sallow friend. He certainly *is* one of the stupidest and most unobservant men in Europe! He asked me as many questions about the Derby as if he had not read a dozen different accounts of the race in the newspapers; whereas, *I* saw no more of the running, than if I had passed the day in the vaults of St. Faith's. We arrived late, got a bad place; and I am not sportswoman enough to climb to a barouche-box, and grill myself an hour in the sun, for the enjoyment of so brief a pleasure. Mrs. Crowhurst, by the way, was seated, outshining Phœbus, on the highest box of a carriage, on the least prominent place of which I should have been sorry to be seen.

But this supper,—I cannot dismiss from my mind the supper at Merioneth House. The duke was in high spirits, and eminently agreeable; my little crooked friend, Lady William Bately, gayer and more brilliant than I ever saw her, fully meriting her title of *La Lucciola*; and every one in his best mood and temper, except the strange man. It is one of the happy privileges of persons so great as the Duke of M——, that they never see people out of humour, or flowers out of bloom. The gardener takes care that the plants exhibited in their conservatory shall be in fullest blossom; and the guests who come to admire them, spread their butterfly wings, and

display their brightest colours, that they may be invited, again and again, to adorn the favoured spot. It almost puts me out of patience, to hear people, like his grace, observe, when some woman is spoken of as capricious, or man as uncertain, "Well, really, *I* think you are unjust; I have known her many years, and have never experienced, from her, anything the least like caprice"—or, "Uncertain? I have uniformly found him one of the most agreeable, obliging persons of my acquaintance!" Of *his* acquaintance, very probably; but in society less imposing, the claws of pussy's satin paws peep out.

By the way, I *did* observe a little betrayal of temper, even at Merioneth House, the other night. We have got a beautiful Piedmontese countess, a Madame di Campo Fiorito, lately arrived from the Continent; exquisitely lovely, exquisitely fascinating, *et qui fait fureur*. All we know of her, at present, is, that she is high born and beautiful. Whether mischievous or not, no one can say; and it is amusing to observe the misgivings excited, in certain circles, by her *début*. The established beauties are, for the moment, thrown into the shade, more especially those on the shady side of noon; for the Campo Fiorito, in her twenty-first year, is delicate of complexion as a blush-rose, and can presume to be singularly simple in her style of dress: no trimmings, no ornaments, no flowers, no jewels—nothing but a plain robe of rich materials—nothing but her fine dark hair. Rouge and frippery are sadly put to the blush by such a contrast. Half a dozen women, whom, last week, I thought charming, seem to have acquired a meretricious air since the countess's arrival. Many look ugly, many old,—all tawdry. *Is* such a rival to be pardoned?

The panic is considerably augmented by general uncertainty as to her conduct and intentions. Is she a flirt, a coquette, or worse? Impossible to guess. Some tremble for their lovers, some for their husbands, some for their sons. Lady This declares, that nothing is so great an interruption to society as the presence of a professed beauty. Lady That, who, for years past, has been a professed beauty herself, has taken refuge, within the last week, in the pleasures of domestic life, parading in Kensington Gardens, with a group of her interesting children. Lady Clackmann, who cannot forgive her for having eclipsed Lady Alicia, says, she has a melodramatic air. Lady Cecilia, who attempts the *bel esprit*, when defeated as a *belle*, says, she is a magnificent automaton, well wound up; while others protest, she is admirably got up as a "Keepsake" heroine.

This supper at Merioneth House was, I suspect, given in her honour. The duke, who likes every thing beautiful or clever, is prepossessed in her favour, and wishes to place her on a good footing with her rivals. But not a charmer of them

all was to be conciliated. Instead of exerting themselves to overpower the enemy, they sulked, and threw the game into her hands. Some, eager to seem unconscious of her presence, contrived only to look supercilious; others talked at her, and, consequently, flippantly and affectedly; while several had a bad headache (the *migraine* of an angry French-woman) and could not, or would not, open their lips. I fancy even the good-natured duke might have admitted, on *this* occasion, that he had seen certain of his fair friends out of humour. I observed Lady Clackmannan inquire, of her nameless neighbour, as we rose from table, what *he* thought of the countess; to which he replied, with an air of indifference, that he had known her, some years ago, at Genoa.

"Apparently you do *not* admire her so much as the rest of the world?" persisted Lady C.

"On the contrary," he replied, "I have long considered her the most beautiful woman of my acquaintance; but I am not easily infatuated by a woman merely beautiful."

It is curious enough, that, with all our proverbial coldness, no people are subject to such fever-fits of enthusiasm as the English,—fever-fits much resembling the boiling-springs among the snows of Hecla. When we *do* run mad, it is very mad indeed. But our *engouemens* are, for the most part, imitative. If we do not invent fashions, we readily adopt them; and seldom throw up our caps in honour of an artist, till his fame is buoyed over the channel, upon the applauses of the whole Continent. Taglioni, Sontag, Paganini, Heberle, were worshipped in London, *not* as the most accomplished performers of their time, but as the idols of Paris, Berlin and Naples; and we should have cared little, perhaps, for the charms of the Contessa di Campo-Fiorito, had it not been for a puff-preliminary, which appeared, accidentally, in the *Morning Post*, the day she first appeared at Almack's, giving an account of a fatal duel fought in honour of her *beaux yeux*, last season, at Florence.

This morning I have had the happiness of a visit from a very dear friend, Lady Southam, who is come to town to take her turn as lady-in-waiting; still the same kind, amiable, straightforward person as when, as Lord Randall's daughter, she used to lecture Armine and myself, in Staffordshire, in the tone of an elder sister, ten years ago. Never was any woman so little calculated for a life of courtiership. Absent, indolent, careless of appearances, the pomps and vanities of life are, to *her*, absolutely incumbering; and when I ventured to ask her, in all the frankness of our boudoir *tête-à-tête*, whether she regretted her appointment, she candidly answered in the affirmative.

"Nothing can be more amiable," said she, "than those I have the honour to serve; nothing lighter than the duties I am required to perform. As far as regards Windsor or St. James's,

I have not a complaint to make. But my position in the world is altered for the worse. People attribute to me an influence I do not possess; and which, if I possessed, Lord Southam would never wish to see me exercise. They ask of me the most unreasonable things. People, with whom I have the slightest possible acquaintance, write to me to procure them invitations, places, preferment, and favours of every sort and description. My life is a perpetual 'No!'—or, rather, a perpetual study of the art of implying a negative without offence. While others of my brother and sister-hood are trying to magnify their importance in the eyes of the world, *my* chief business is to be thought twice as little as they choose to suppose me."

"I can conceive," said I, "that your pride will not allow you to be a frequent petitioner; still, you must have many opportunities of obliging, without compromising your own dignity."

"Less than you would suppose; and quite as little inclination to profit by them. My comfort in society is destroyed by an unavowed dread, that prevails, of my espionage. In mentioning some trivial fact, people take the liberty of entreating me not to repeat it; which, being interpreted, means, 'Pray, don't tell the queen;' whom I should just as soon think of accosting with a recital of such trash as mentioning it in my prayers. Even my friends exchange significant looks in my presence, as much as to say, 'Take care—you forget whom you have here—you are getting yourselves into a scrape;' and last winter, Lady Emily Sunderland actually taxed me with having acquainted her majesty that Mr. Sunderland had a stall at the Opera;—a fact which, as the queen disapproves of dissipation in the clergy, was supposed to have kept them away from the Pavilion balls."

So much for the delicate distresses of a lady in waiting! I must now occupy myself with mine. Having a new dress to order for Lady Sittingbourne's breakfast, to which Herbert has consented that dear Armine shall accompany me, I shall choose for her a bonnet and pelisse exactly like my own.

What a diverting morning have I derived from my campaign among the milliners! This breakfast, it seems, has set all the *beau-monde* vanity-mad. It is the first of the season; and one would think our illustrious beauties had never before enjoyed an occasion of displaying their roses, lilies, and blonde or Brussels veils, on a green lawn. All the juveniles, I observe, are enchanted with the prospect of a breakfast; while those a little on the wane, who dread the exposition of the coming crowsfoot and first gray hair, are trying to creep out of the engagement.

"For my part, I detest sunshine dissipation," drawled Lady Evelyn Beresford, whom I met at Devy's, languishing over a *chapeau paille de riz*, most appropriately trimmed with *belles*

de nuit; while the rubicund Mrs. Gresham Ronsham, in a pale pink hat and feathers, stood smiling at herself, like Malvolio, in Devy's looking-glass, the attendant handmaidens protesting that she was "*ravissante—faite a peindre!*" Away she went in the family coach, hat and bandbox on her knee, lest any more favourite customer should induce Madame D. to play the traitress, and make over, to a less deserving aspirant, her *chapeau de Longchamps*!

I sometimes fancy that a spirit of malicious perversity instigates the councils of the *modiste* tribe. They seem to take delight in suggesting primrose or blush colour to the coarse and ruddy, *cerise* and *coquelicot* to the red-haired, and green or blue to the sallow and insipid. Of a certainty they have some cause for *guignon* against their customers! How often do we see handsome, well-mannered girls, who would themselves so well become the wares they are fated to manufacture, stand, hour after hour, in a close show-room, exposed to the most harassing impertinence, the most perplexing caprices! The fine lady, who fancies the destinies of mankind dependent upon the folds of her silver turban, commands and countermands, wrangles, disputes, revokes, and changes her mind, thirty times in half as many minutes; till the poor, tired victim of her arrogance at length inscribes in the tablets of her brain a feather falling to the right for a feather falling to the left; and on the morrow, Lady Theodolinda returns, the detested turban in her hand, and the offender is summoned before a court millinerial, to be broke or reprimanded. Her ladyship threatens to withdraw her custom and patronage, unless justice is done upon the stupid young person who thought proper to take her orders; and floods of tears are drawn down the fair cheeks of the poor apprentice, who has an aged mother dependent for bread upon her salary, because Lord Charles happened to pass Lady Theodolinda in the crush-room without notice, owing (as she supposes) to the frightful fall of that detestable feather.

"The great ladies have much to answer for, madam, for their conduct towards us," said a good sort of motherly mantua-maker, with whom I once conversed on the subject. "They come to us persisting that they have not a gown to wear, that they shall be obliged to stay away from some dinner or ball, unless we send home a dress by a particular day and hour; and the poor overtired young women in my employ are, consequently, obliged to sit up another night, in addition to the ten or twelve they have been passing without rest—pale, wan, exhausted, and in danger of falling into consumption, for want of air, exercise, and sleep. But, when the dress is taken home, the first thing that strikes the eye of the heartsick apprentice, in the lady's dressing-room, is a choice of half a dozen gowns, silk, satin, lace, blue, pink, and white, laid out for selection; many of them never worn. It is enough, madam,

to make liars of our young people, when they find themselves so falsely dealt with. Again," she resumed, finding me give ear to her accusations, "what a lesson for a simple-hearted young girl, such as the great number of those apprenticed to me by respectable parents,—farmers or tradesmen,—to be introduced into the dressing-room of a fine lady, and pass half an hour waiting there, with the confidential maid! Such discreditable secrets as she is likely to hear, such discreditable secrets to see!—cosmetics, washes, paints; beautifications for the hair, teeth, eye-brows, complexion; false ringlets, false braids, false pads for every part of the figure! And from this abode of deceit and extravagance, strewed with billet-doux and unpaid bills, I expect her to come home pure and uncorrupted, to be industrious, frugal, and, above all, willing to forget her possession of those attractions which she has seen thus disgracefully counterfeited by one, who happens to be born in a more prosperous condition of life than her own. Believe me, madam, a sad example is shown by our great ladies!"

I fear I did not bear this lecture in mind, when I proceeded on my bonnet-hunt this morning, but it was forcibly recalled to me at Howell and James's, where Lady Christina R——, whom I never saw by day-light, except half-hidden in her *vis à vis*, with her face surrounded by blonde, was trying on a hat. As she turned to recover her bonnet from the table behind her, her face was fully revealed by broad day from the sky-light; and the coating of rouge and pearl-powder was disgusting. The white lead looked blue: and the eyes, glazed with dissipation, seemed the only vital portion of the face. What a lesson! what a degradation of the sex!

Nothing can be simpler than the dresses I have chosen for my sister and myself. Herbert will have no excuse for renewing his frequent charge against me of looking like *La Reine de Golconde*.

Clarence Delaval honoured me, last night, by a confidence of his passion for his cousin Alicia, with which I could have well dispensed; for I can be of no service to the young people, and shall greatly offend the old ones by even wishing them well. Clarence's prospects, poor fellow, are far from brilliant. Sir Jenison Delaval, who, being a valetudinarian, will water-gruelize himself to the age of eighty, having only four thousand a year, can make no great settlement on his son; and though Clarence is next heir to Delaval Castle and the Irish property, I have no desire that my good brother-in-law should make way for him. Lady Alicia has been brought up as delicately and luxuriously as becomes the only daughter of the house of Clackmannan, and is just fit to live in the heart of a rose, and be nourished on its perfume. It will not do! I shall persuade Lady Celia to send Clarence off to the Continent as soon as possible.

This hurry-skurry of dissipation makes one very good-for-nothing! Not a day nor an hour can I make my own, to devote to any useful purpose. All the world is talking of a wonderful speech on the poor laws, made by a wonderful Lord Hartston; yet I have not been able to read a line of it. I must have met this Lord Hartston, for I have frequently heard his name pronounced in society; but I cannot bring him to my recollection, unless it be a heavy doughty-looking man I found sitting one morning with Cecilia, clattering unintelligible political economy like a word-mill. I must read his speech, however, which not to be able to discuss argues oneself a dunce.

It is surprising in how short a time the prevailing topic spreads from one end of London to the other: no influenza half so epidemic. The clubs, I fancy, are the great dispensers of gossip contagions; but every day brings forth its tale of wonder—political, literary, theatrical, scandalous, or fashionable; which, between the hours of six and eight, is discussed with fish and soup, and more or less of prose, in every house of credit and renown, from Hyde Park Corner to Russell Square. As to Lord Hartston's speech, he and his oratory have afforded a text for the last two days, for as much discussion as would fill the Bodleian library. If the man be in earnest, I honour him; but so many of these *soi-disant* philanthropists select a subject *ad captandum*, that I must read, mark, and learn, before I give full faith to his honesty of purpose.

To-night we are to have the new opera; and I have promised Lady Cecilia to be there, for the first *coup d'archet*. She is so much more susceptible than myself to the charms of music, that I have no right to disturb her ecstacies, by the opening and shutting of a door. My fair cousin's nerves are wonderfully excitable. Reared in the lap of luxury, as the spoiled pet of a fine lady, in a perfumed and overheated atmosphere, she acquired a morbid sensibility of heart and head, which her after-life was not fated to counteract. Excepting during the months passed with me at Delaval Castle, Lady Cecilia has never indulged in any but the most enervating habits; till, at last, even her love of the arts has become almost an hysterical passion. She has wrought herself up, for instance, to such a pitch of enthusiasm, concerning this new opera, that I have no doubt she will be obliged to tranquilize herself with æther; and I shall find her, to-night, salts-bottle in hand, her soul ready to be wasted upon a jig to heaven!

For my part, having been a diligent auditress at the last three rehearsals, my ardour is somewhat damped. What a *mania* for attending rehearsals prevails just now in London! People seem to find strange delight in stumbling their way through dark, dusty passages into a darker, dustier box, which by daylight, smells (like a pew at evening service in a damp country church) of serge curtains and straw matting, in order to hear a blundering orchestra tapped to order by a cross leader,

or stormed into tune by a fiery *prima donna*; to admire la Grisi in her bonnet and pelisse, or Rubini piping his *falsetto*, with his beaver not *up* but *on*. *Pour moi, je n'aime pas qu'on me désillusionne!* I could never weep again at Malibran's Desdemona, had I seen her rehearse it in a chintz gown, with the *prima violino* out of tune, or out of sorts.

Are not the French mistaken in their notion, that the English are *peu impressionables*? Have we not, on the contrary, of late years, borrowed their ready excitability? I arrived, last night, before the first stroke of the overture; yet every box was full; pit, gallery, pigeon-holes teeming with eager faces; nay, the very wanderers of the lobbies brought to a stand-still, by a general compression: every inch of standing-room occupied. Such a "hush," too, as preceded the preparatory flourish of the leader's bow; a "sh," as with the hissing of all the serpents of Tartarus! Not a fan to be seen moving in the house; scarcely an eyebrow allowed to blink. I felt quite awe-struck by the responsibility of the composer to such an audience; and was absolutely relieved by the thundering *applauses* that followed a spirited and characteristic overture. Before the close of the first act, of which no fewer than four *morceaux* were encored, I began to be almost as nervous as Lady Cecilia; not from the effect of the music, but from the effect of the music on the audience. When I saw the cheeks of others flushed with rapture, their eyes sparkling with delight, their hands bearing involuntary testimony to the emotion of their ecstasified feelings, I seemed to tremble at my own insensibility. These people evidently heard something in the tones of Grisi, which *I* wanted sense to hear; and the more moving incidents of the second act, which, being familiar to *me*, I managed to contemplate with tearless eyes, drew floods from those around me; ay, even "iron tears down Pluto's cheek," by moistening the rouge of the dowager Duchess of Plymouth. Lady Cecilia was ashamed of my hardness of heart. She, poor soul, wept, and shuddered, and applauded; and right glad was I of the excuse of going home to dress for a ball, to escape the rhodomontade of criticism, which I knew would be poured forth by the visitors to our box, on the falling of the curtain.

Leaving the *fanatica per la musica* to weep away their harmonious agony, I hastened to my toilet, and arrived at lady Buntingford's, fresh and composed, just as the first *contre-danse* commenced; when, to my amazement, I found numbers of those I had left at the opera, overpowered with emotion, smiling flirting, chatting, *en-avant-deuxing*, without a trace of tears, or aromatic vinegar; their trimmings and white gloves a little soiled, perhaps, by contact with the King's Theatre, but every other impression wholly evaporated. The ball was a pleasant one to *me*, for I met Armine and her husband; and, though sadly sneered at by Herbert, for the coquetry of hav-

ing altered my dress after the opera, I found him, on the whole, more agreeable than usual. Before two o'clock, however, they disappeared; but I, being engaged to Lord Lancaster for a waltz, had courage to remain, and defy my brother-in-law's caustic comments on the want of dignity of those who wear a ball-threadbare. In one of the pauses of the waltz, I discovered, among the bystanders, Lady Clackmannan's saturnine friend, looking scornfully upon our proceedings. Had I been dancing with any one but Lancaster, I should have inquired the name of the mysterious Mephistophiles. But I did not choose to appear interested by the mere appearance of any young man; nor would I provoke Lord Lancaster's irony by my ignorance, if, as I imagine, my sallow despiser is one known to all the world but myself. There was something in the contemptuousness of his air as he stood considering my partner and myself, which my feminine spirit seemed roused to defy; and when, on the conclusion of the waltz, Lord Lancaster tried to engage me for the cotillion, for the first time in my life I complied. The cotillion is a dance which, in my conscience, I detest. Danced with spirit, it is a romping, unladylike exhibition; danced with tameness, it is only vulgar and stupid,—the ordeal of a chaperon's patience, and a lover's magnanimity. I have, therefore, studiously avoided it; and ill-natured as it may seem, I form a disadvantageous opinion of the manners of girls, and the wisdom of their mammas, who are habitual stayers-out of a ball, and dancers of the cotillion. A widow, in such a position as mine, is, I am sure, one of the last persons to be involved in any such diversion; yet I was actually sneered into standing up at Lady Buntingford's ball. I was glad when several exclamations of "Ha, Mrs. Delaval! this is the first time I ever saw you dance the cotillion! *mieux vaut tard que jamais!*" bore witness to my innocence; but they rendered me only the more conscious of the folly I was committing and, consequently, as awkward as I was uneasy.

Still my tormentor kept his ground. During the first three figures, *there* he stood,—his tall dignified person overlooking the circle,—about as stern, cold, and solemn, as Stonehenge; nor was it till some of the romping figures commenced, and he saw me commence my round of impertinence with a crimson satin cushion in my hand, that his disgust reached the climax, and he stalked away. I could have cried to think what an idiot I was making of myself; but apprehension of the world's dread laugh, combined with that of my supercilious partner, kept me in order.

After all these vicissitudes, the pleasures of my day and night concluded with a tremendous nightmare; born, I believe, of unripe pine-apple and indifferent champagne; or, perhaps, who knows? an indifferent conscience. I dreamed a dream which, alas! needed no interpretation. I fancied I was crossing, on a crazy raft, a small lake that lies on the

Ballyshumna estate; till by degrees the sheet of water narrowed and narrowed into a fetid marshy ditch, on the banks of which stood a succession of horrid hovels, such as I have too often seen in the original; from which proceeded howlings and shriekings, as for a wake over the dead. So narrow was the ditch, that, every moment, the raft seemed to jar and wedge itself into the bank, when hundreds of noxious reptiles were startled from their hiding-places, and crawled for refuge into the water. At last, out of all patience with my self-imelled steerage, I tried to climb the slimy, slippery bank, and managed to make my way to one of the most dilapidated cabins; from the mouldering walls of which, repulsive sounds and smells were perceptible. Nevertheless, the evil genius of my dream compelled me to enter; and there, stretched under horsecloths, round the naked chamber, lay men, women, and children, purple with the typhus; and in the midst, extended on the unhinged door of the hovel, the corpse of a young woman, already—but no! my pen cannot record such a combination of horrors!

At length I seemed to take courage, and tried to silence the howlings and lamentations around me; when suddenly the figure of Lady Clackmannan's strange man, attired in long garments, stood by my side, accosting me in the harshest tones and terms.

"Why do you reprehend these people?" he seemed to say. "It is for *you* they are suffering! It is to furnish plenty to your table that *they* are famishing! The leavings of your lap-dog would be dainties to sustain the strength of this dying family! Do the cries of their anguish offend your delicate ears? *They* are tormented to afford you the means of languishing in an opera-box! Do the exhalations of this den of wretchedness oppress you? Where would you find guineas to buy bouquets for your footmen, were not these outcasts taxed to supply your jointure? Woman! woman!—A heavy account shall be demanded of you for this thing! You shall answer before the Most High God for the sufferings of these nursing mothers,—of these young children; and repay in sackcloth and ashes your profligate levity!"

Having roused myself at last with a painful gasp from this overpowering dream, I could not help exclaiming with Lear,

"Oh! I have ta'en too little care of this!"

I have written, this morning, to William Delaval, inclosing an order on my banker for the benefit of the poor on his estate; for though I know him to be a liberal landlord, yet I, who draw so handsome a provision from the property, ought to take my share in ministering to the necessities of its population.

We have all written and repeated till we are tired, that "dreams are the interludes of a busy fancy;" but are they not haply something more? Do they not infer a benignant and

protecting presence, influencing with terrors, or soothing with compassion? Be it indigestion, be it spiritual guardianship, I am the better for my nightmare of last night. It has given me food for meditation, not e'en to madness, but e'en to repentance.

Seven o'clock.—Just returned from my ride in the park, out of spirits, or out of temper. It is becoming too hot to ride before dinner; but one's hours and habits in London are too dependent on the whims of others, to admit of anything so rational as an early dinner, and a ride afterwards. To-morrow, however, I promise myself an early dinner. For the first time I am engaged to encounter the polite suffocation of the ventilator. There is to be an interesting debate; and some good speaking is expected.

Will those tiresome Mardynvilles ever let me alone? They have sent me a card for another dinner; and the Duke of Merioneth told me to-day, in the park, that they stopped their carriage to invite him (for they go out airing together like the king and queen of Brentford), on the plea of, "to meet Mrs. Delaval." Taken by surprise, he accepted; but I have already sent my excuse. What a mania with some people is the pride of improving their acquaintance; or, properly speaking, adding names to their visiting list. The whole business of their life seems to consist, as in a game at commerce, in making up a hand of blazes! Season after season, they toil to convert esquires into baronets, baronets into lords, lords into viscounts, earls into marquesses, or dukes! For peers, like crotchetts, have their comparative value; and, as one semibreve is worth thirty-two demi-semiquavers, one duke covers at least a dozen baronets. I am constantly hearing it remarked, "How wonderfully the Mardynvilles have got on!"—a phrase which, being interpreted, strictly means, "What a wonderful number of their old acquaintance they have been enabled to cut!"

Three o'clock, Saturday morning.—How singular an adventure; how stupid and unobservant I must have been! But here on paper, at least, let me collect my scattered thoughts, and *commencer par le commencement*.

I was chaperoned in my political debut by the no less a person than the far-famed Miss Randall, the bluest of blues, and most busy of busy-bodies, who scarcely misses a night in the ventilator throughout the session. She has her favourite nook, which no one but some miserable novice would think of usurping; and the volumes of impure air she must have imbibed since politics came into fashion, sufficiently account for the pallor of her face, and the ardour of its predominating feature. No "blue" had ever so red a nose, or so yellow a complexion. With Miss Randall, accordingly, I ascended into the mysterious lantern, whence we were to bend our ears to the eloquence of the House: and I had the vexation to find that we were late. Every corner was already filled with ladies as in-

quisitive as myself, with the exception of Miss Randall's accustomed seat, and one (in the adjoining compartment of which was a shabby-looking person in a black bonnet and cloak) on which lay a handkerchief, as if to mark that it was taken. As I paused opposite, however, the person in the cloak civilly removed the handkerchief, and stiffly informed me I was at liberty to occupy the place. I would willingly have refused, not being inclined to settle in such close quarters with a neighbour so little distinguished; but having no choice but to accept or lose my last chance, I niched myself in, and gave my attention to the business of the scene below. A very small portion of the House was discernible from my peephole; but I was fortunate that it happened to include one of the ablest of the Tory speakers, who rose shortly after we entered the ventilator.

It was my first opportunity (with the exception of an unimportant occasion at the Dublin University) of witnessing public oratory of any description; and I own my impression was that of disappointment. Accustomed to connect such magnificent results with the eloquence of the House of Commons, and to peruse such laboured but fluent specimens of parliamentary speaking, I was quite startled by the poverty, the rawness, the insignificance, of the reality. Of the three first members it was my luck to hear, the manner was so detestable that the matter hardly reached my comprehension; and even in one pointed out by Fame and the cheers of the House as a most valuable member, I was shocked by the schoolboy awkwardness, the false emphasis, and vulgar action, disfiguring what I might have perused in the *Standard* as an impressive and convincing piece of argument. Nevertheless, hearing murmurs of rapture arise from many corners of the ventilator, I found that I had only to blame my want of discernment; and that the humming, ha-ing, and see-sawing, which so much offended me, were an habitual portion of the mere delivery of one whose opinions obtain influential weight in the country. Ashamed of my weak prejudices, I fell into a reverie, which not even the boisterous applauses, following the concluding period of the honourable gentleman's oration, served to divert. I was far away in the days and haunts of my youth; when my dear, good aunt Margaret, grown blind and curious, used to make Armine or myself read aloud the debates, as we sat, of a summer's morning, in our old hornbeam arbour, overlooking the silver Trent, or, of a winter's evening, by the fireside, interrupting some prosy speech to ask her questions of Pitt and Fox, Wyndham and Horner; till I was brought to fancy, that

“The applause of listening senates to command,”

was an accomplishment worthy of a demigod. I used to envy Grattan's daughters; and wish—not that Heaven had made

another man,—no! nor even the wife of such another
irls are always consequential in ther bib-and-tucker
s)—but his *mother*,—a Cornelia, a Volumnia, a Mrs.
n, senior, or a venerable Countess of Chatham!

defeated projects of maternal aggrandisement were
through my brain, and producing a smile upon my
en I was recalled to myself by the intense stillness
low and around me, and the clear enunciation of the
aker, whose eloquence commanded such breathless
1. Leaning eagerly over my ledge, I tried in vain to
from which side of the House the voice proceeded.
aker was completely concealed from me by the gal-
id, overcoming my natural reserve, I hazarded an
of my neighbour concerning the name of the gentle-
his legs. An unceremonious "Hush!" silenced my
and I could scarcely forgive myself for having pro-
ich a rebuke from such a person. My ire was soon
l, and my attention otherwise engrossed; for very
utes served to convince me that *now*, indeed I was
to an orator,—an orator after my own heart, an
ned patriot, such as, twenty years ago, I was am-
o boast as my son. What fervour, what conviction,
power in every sentence; the voice of a man's heart
tering the hearts of men; for it advocated the claims
owly, yet obtained favour in the ears of the great!
—two hours, did he speak on, invariably great, in-
convincing; abounding in matter of fact, yet high-
id replete with moral dignity, where the more artificial
ratory were admissible. I began at last to dread the
of his exposition, and wished not to be too fully con-
est the purpose of the speaker should be accomplished;
n the cheers of the House proclaimed the conclusion
ration, I drew a long breath, disappointed that all had
d. My mind was completely subjugated by a power
I never dreamed before.

"I think you of *that*?" whispered Miss Randall, coming
me, as all were hushing down their ejaculations, in
do justice to the honourable but unfortunate member,
ness of whose "prattle" it was to be "tedious" in

ndid!" said I, wishing to concentrate my encomiums
least possible offence to the new speaker.

not that worth coming to hear? was not *that* the
eech you ever heard in your life? Eloquent, manly,
armonious, philanthropic, philosophical;" and she pro-
string epithet upon epithet, in a style to have pro-
e laughter of a mute at a funeral. Now, even Na-
ie Great used to admit, that nothing chilled him so
the false enthusiasm of others; I, the little, may
that her rhapsodies froze the praises ready to burst
n my lips.

"Yes," said I coolly, "a very good speech."

"Good?—You mean divine, luminous, astounding!"

"I mean a very able speech and speaker. Who was it?"

"Who?"—You cannot be in earnest!—There is but one such orator in the House, but one such orator in England, but one such in Europe, but one such in the world!—Cicero, Demosthenes, Mirabeau."

"And his name?" I interrupted, dreading the explosion of her verbosity.

"His name? His name is Lord Hartston! But, my dear Mrs. Delaval, you must be jesting! You were as well aware of this all the time, as—"

"May I venture to remind you, that many here are listening to the debate?" drily observed the elderly lady in the cloak, apparently impatient of my garrulous friend's interruption; and away flounced Miss Randall to her seat, muttering—"insolent, ridiculous, contemptible, under-bred," &c. &c.

Nevertheless, the speaker on his legs was fully deserving attention. As a piece of casuistry, I have rarely heard any thing more curious than his reply; or more striking than his art of breaking through a few weak points of his adversary's fence, without seeming to attack them. Nevertheless, all his art, which was considerable, did not succeed in the main object, of involving in ridicule the philanthropic projects of the patriot.

At the close of the reply, the debate was adjourned: and I waited only the announcement of my carriage, which Clarence Delaval, who was in the gallery, had promised to send up. Half-a-dozen dandies had already made their way to the ventilator, and were whispering in its divers nooks, when the old lady, who had been seated opposite me, suddenly addressed a young man, whom I recognized as Lady Clackmannan's long-chinned friend, with, "Very well, Eustace—I am satisfied."

"Eustace" seemed satisfied, too; for he extended his hand, and cordially accepted a shake of hers; and away they hobbed down stairs together. I could not help fancying there was a degree of affectation in his avoidance of even a glance at me; but I was glad at least to have become acquainted with the monster's name; and "Mr. Eustace" was thenceforward to be inscribed in the tablets of my memory among my favourite aversions.

But, as we were returning home, the Randall suddenly exclaimed, "What did you think of Lord Hartston?"

"I told you before, that he was a very able speaker."

"I know. But *himself*—what did you think of *him*?"

"From the place I occupied, I could not even catch a glimpse of him."

"Pho, pho! The place you occupied was exactly the one where he was to be seen. That old monster in the cloak was

his mother, the only woman in the world, I fancy, to whom he shows the slightest attention. Had I known it, I would have been more civil to her. When he came into the ventilator, and all the women about me were bustling up to get a sight of him, I had a great mind to go and make her an apology, as an excuse for getting a full view of Lord Hartston."

Inwardly congratulating myself that she had amended her intentions, I now fell into an uneasy state of cogitation on all that had passed. I could scarcely recollect what I had said of Lord Hartston's speech in his mother's hearing.

Saturday.—To-day I dined with the Herberts, quietly, we three alone; for I took courage seriously to protest against Herbert's unkindness, in involving me in his state dinner parties. As soon as the servants were out of the room, I related to them my tale of mystery, beginning with my first impression of dislike towards Lord Hartston, and ending with my glow of enthusiasm in favour of his speech.

"I knew the history before," said Herbert, coldly, "with the exception of your cold and hot fit; and I suppose no one is entitled to interpret the eternalague of a lady's temperament, but the incubus appointed to preside over it."

"You can have known nothing at all about the matter," said I, angrily; "for I have never mentioned the subject, even to my sister."

"Perhaps not. It was Lord Hartston who mentioned it to me; one of the dearest friends I have on earth. He was rather inclined to admire you, Harriet. He had heard wonders of you from *us*. But Hartston is, as he has a right to be, difficult. Nothing can exceed his horror of the flirting, frivolous women of the day. It is not for such men as Hartston to run a race with your Lord Lancasters, or your Mr. Penrhyns; and the moment he saw you given over to dandies and milliners, he renounced all thoughts of you. Luckily enough, as you find him so ugly and disagreeable."

"Yes, very lucky," said I, more and more annoyed by all I was hearing: "but Lord Hartston is the first man I have happened to meet who has tried to sneer me into an affection for him."

"I don't suppose he troubled his head much about the matter," said Herbert, in his usual disagreeable tone. And Armine, perceiving me to be annoyed, turned the conversation into a different channel.

Lord Hartston, then, the great orator,—or, more truly, the distinguished patriot,—is the man whose proceedings have so much annoyed me! And now, doubtless, the old lady, whose countenance struck me as so forbidding, will take care to acquaint him with the impudent interruption she bore with during the debate, and the levity that offended her. After all, what signifies to me the opinion of either mother or son? I perfectly remember having heard from Armine that Hartston

Abbey was within visiting distance of them in Bedfordshire, and that Lord Hartston had been the college friend of Herbert. I dare say he is just such a dry, disagreeable person as my brother-in-law!

—What a delicious day! How auspicious for our breakfast! Mild, balmy, a little clouded—not too much sun, not too much air, not too much any thing. The precise *beau moment* for a *déjeuner* is past: the moment of lilacs, laburnums, and Guel-dres roses. But the acacias are in flower, and the roses peeping out; and roses and acacias are enough for any moderate woman. The American plants too, are at their brightest; and Lady Sittingbourne's garden is a sheet of rhododendrous and kalmias. I like the thoughts of a breakfast, and of being accompanied by my brother and sister. This is the first time the Herberts have been out with me since I came to town.

After nearly twelve hours pleasure, thoroughly knocked up! Why will people so grievously overdo their diversions? It would have been really pleasant to get away from the glare and dust of London for a few hours, to sit under green trees and enjoy the fragrance of the gardens, and the freshness of the river, with, perhaps, a hundred persons scattered through the grounds; and at seven, a cold dinner, with plenty of iced champagne,—and back to town again. But all these tents, marquees, wreaths of artificial flowers, and variegated lamps, prepared for midnight, but scenting the air most abominably at mid-day,—all these wooden platforms for musicians and dancing, tumbling, and equestrian exercises,—are any thing but accessory to rural pleasures. Five hundred persons, crammed into the space of five acres, encumbered with bowers, trellises, kiosks and temples,—all eager after novelty, and running here, and hurrying there, to listen to Russian bands, or stare at Indian jugglers,—would ruin even the Garden of Eden; and then, to crowd away from the roses and green lawn into a stifling tent, to eat turtle and venison, and drink Madeira and lime-punch, is the climax of every thing disagreeable. The men, however, seemed to find much satisfaction in their *pâtés* and *galantines*; and even Herbert got into such good-humour after some excellent hock, that, in the course of the evening, he insisted upon dancing with me. The gardens looked lovely, illuminated with glow-worm lamps; but I should have liked it better had the lawn smelt less of Roman punch and ham-sandwiches.

I never saw a larger assemblage of pretty women. But they struck me generally as being over-dressed. Open—garden—daylight does not bear a great variety of gaudy colours. Every tint and material looks tawdry and coarse, compared with the flowers and the skies; and nothing seems to harmonize with the landscape but simple white. I quite agree with the poet (Cowper, I believe) who loved nothing so well as to see a woman in a white dress sitting under a green tree. But,

at Lady Sittingbourne's villa, even the trees were decked out "ornate and gay;" so that their dryads and hamadryads could not be too fine to do them honour. When I give a breakfast, every thing shall be fresh, sweet, and natural. We will feed under a solid roof; but roam about among the flowers and birds, under the canopy of heaven.

I was rather disgusted yesterday by the conduct of Mr. Penrhyn. Shrewd as he is, he must perceive that Herbert uniformly avoids him; yet, though he saw we were together, nothing would prevent his sauntering about after us, and ruffling my brother-in-law's rare good-humour. He has been staying a week in Surrey for the Epsom races, and seems determined to make up for the time lost of my society. A man who has been passing a week in a country-house is sure to be a bore. After August, in the usual routine of things, a popular man goes from house to house, and rubs off the habits of each before he reaches the next. Not so at this season of the year, when change from London is a strange vicissitude, calculated to make an impression. Mr. Penrhyn, accordingly, was full of Stonelands—every thing was compared with Stonelands,—Stonelands, of course, obtaining the preference. Lady Sittingbourne's flower-garden, for instance, which, though a villa-Paradise for peris, is not to be named with the shrubberies and wildernesses of a place thirty miles from town. "The conservatories at Stonelands were so magnificent; thirty different species of the air-plant, and a vanilla plant covering a trellise a hundred feet long; Lady Sittingbourne's greenhouses looked so Covent-Gardenish and vulgar!" Then, at dinner, a fine haunch excited his disgust; "the venison-haricot at Stonelands had put him out of conceit with roasts so early in the season;—at least a fortnight too early for buck venison. A haunch was never eatable till there were French beans to eat with it."

"But there are French beans in abundance," exclaimed Herbert, pointing them out.

"Ay, ay—*forced* ones—forced, flavourless things, stewed up like *points d'asperges*. Nothing so detestable as dressed vegetables with a *roti*. At Stonelands, the potatoes were served *en chemise*."

Then, at Stonelands, he had met the Rossanas; and we had the recapitulation of Lady Laura's Illyrian airs, and Lady Sophia's sketches; perhaps there never was a spot abounding like Stonelands in subjects for the pencil; and the Stonelands music room was built after a design from Dr. Burney; nothing like it in England to give effect to Handel's music.

Observing Herbert to be on the fret, I gave my arm to Mr. Penrhyn, and walked away; and, by way of a topic of conversation as remote as possible from Stonelands, selected Lord Hartston's two recent speeches.

"Oh! you are turning politician?" cried he with a sneer.

" I have been quite worn down with politics at Stonelands! Lord Hartston's speech on the poor laws? True! I recollect. Lord Rossana observed that Hartston was always building up cast-iron dens to cage canary-birds; or, no! that was not exactly it,—was always making gilt-wire aviaries to encage eagles; or, upon my soul, I forget how it was; but I remember that we all laughed amazingly at the remark. We are discussing, by the way, for breakfast, some *rognons à la brochette*, that would have put George Hanton into a fever."

" The speech made a great impression in London," said I, disgusted with its frivolity.

" Of course it did, because Hartston himself has made a great impression in London. There was such a fuss, if you remember, about his being lost with his yacht last year in the *Ægean*; and when he turned up, and it turned out (according to the inquiries set on foot by the false reports) that Hartston had a clear forty thousand a-year, every body seemed determined to encumber his estate with a jointure. All the world wanted to marry him. But Hartston is devilish sly. You should have seen how cleverly he made off when the Crowhurst made up to him. Hartston knows what he is about. The marchioness would be glad enough to hook him for Lady Alicia; but, like other prodigious fishes, he will break her line and disappoint her."

Nothing I dislike more than to hear a man of family and fortune, like Mr. Penrhyn, talk of "hooking," and "husband-hunting," and so forth. In describing others as matrimonial prizes, he is far more suspicious of projects entertained against himself. He fancies himself in continual danger of being carried off by some manœuvring mamma. His game with myself I can readily discern. He is deferring his proposals till he can make sure of being accepted; and though, to any man honestly in love, and honestly intentioned towards me, I should not scruple to afford a hint to prevent him from compromising his dignity by a useless pursuit, I shall certainly leave Mr. Penrhyn to his own enlightenment.

Before we left Lady Sittingbourne's, Herbert invited me to dine with them to-morrow, to meet his sallow friend; but, after all I had heard and seen, I judged it more dignified to stay away. Besides, I hate an early obligato dinner on Sundays. I like to go late to the Zoological Gardens, and remain there among the last; that is, among all the pleasant people.

—I have been reading over the last fifty pages of my diary, and am shocked by its egotism. I certainly intended to write of myself—of my feelings and perceptions: yet, though I have written more of others, and less of my own experience than I purposed, I seem to have written more selfishly than I thought was in my nature. I have extenuated nothing of the frailties of my acquaintance, nor set down aught in malice of my own I had intended to keep my journal for reperusal in old age, if

the hope of diverting myself with the follies of my youth; but I suspect that if this little volume and myself should both survive, I should be shocked, rather than amused, by the picture it presents.

If anger be a brief madness, that which we call the season is, alas! a long one. However sober our views in the commencement,—however deliberately we fill the cup, and sip the nectarious contents, yet, at the moment we ought to lay it aside, a wild intoxication comes over us, and we quaff again and again, till all is reeling sensuality! We mean to be frugal,—we become prodigal; we mean to be sage,—we become giddy; we mean to be wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best,—and all ends in a frothy vortex of dissipation. At first, we are inconvenienced by the heated atmosphere of the ball-room; towards the close of the season it becomes habitual. At first, we are shocked by the rumour of a scandal; towards the close of the season, we repeat them ourselves. At first, our better taste revolts against any new and preposterous fashion; towards the close of the season, we have exhausted these old extravagances, and are imagining new. At first, we shrink from the familiarity of the man who leans into our carriage, or enters our opera-box without ceremony; towards the close of the season, every body is familiar with every body; conversation is worn down from small-talk into smaller, as the gravel of the “ring” has been ground into stifling dust. By degrees, people adopt a jargon technical as a telegraphic despatch; and to listen to the dialogue of two persons of fashion, who have been frequenting the same parties and people for the last three months, would sadly perplex any rational expounder of the king’s English. Every phrase is couched in cant terms, conventional allusions, local jests; and the fine, who look upon the cockney dialect of their housemaids as the most vulgar in the language, might themselves be convicted of the utterance of idioms derived from sources far less pure than “the well of English undefiled.”

The clubs are, in some measure, the origin of the circulation of fashionable slang. Politics and the turf may, and doubtless *do*, supply the staple of their talk. But, after beef and mutton, comes the course of trifles and anchovy-toast; and idle people, who meet to gossip with each other, on indifferent subjects, thirty days in the month, insensibly adopt a conventional way of talking, a cant slang of triviality, and a habit of exaggeration and embellishment. Trace some tale of current scandal to its course, and we shall find the tints of the picture heightened as it passes from club to club; beginning with pale pink at mild, indolent, sober-suited Boodle’s; and glaring from vermillion to crimson as it blushes through the Traveller’s and Crockford’s. The anecdote and phrase in which it is couched are circulated at home by the husband or brother; and, at last, the “hyperbolical fiend,” called Fashion,

is taught to vent its pribbles and prabbles in a tone as jingling paltry as that of the silver bell hung round the neck of my lady's lap-dog. But again I am inveighing against the errors of others; for I have neither husband nor brother to initiate me into the accidence of fashionable slang; yet the influence of the season has operated as unfavourably on myself as on all the rest.

I wonder whether it would be possible to apply one's lip to this said poisoned chalice, after Lady Grace's fashion—"soberly?" Dr. Johnson, and other mouthers of big words, have told us, that "abstinence is easier than temperance;" but is sobriety,—in a certain class, and educated as nine-tenths of us are now educated,—*is* sobriety a *possible* virtue?

Here are my next-door neighbours, for instance,—no sillier, I imagine, than *their* neighbours, and belonging to an order of society which the Thurtells of *our* society are apt to designate respectable; instead of "a *gig*," they keep "a family coach."

Jesting apart, they are people who toast church and state, pay their taxes cheerfully, and dole out their Christmas chal-drons and blankets to the poor: righteous people in their generation,—thinking no evil, because thinking is a thing out of their province; a thing for which they pay the king's minis-ters, the rector of the parish, and their family solicitor.

Yet, for the last ten years, nothing has Mrs. Gresham Ronsham, of Wrangham Hall, been pouring into the ears of her daughters, but a leperous distilment, flavoured with the joys of a London season. For this, the progress of their education has been hastened; all their knowledge was to be acquired, all their accomplishments rubbed in, with a view to "coming out."—"For heaven's sake! Mary, don't poke so, or I shall never venture to take you up to town to be presented;"—or, "My dear Jane, you have not been in the stocks this morning. Consider how mortified you will be, your first season in town, when you find yourself so much awk-warder than other girls."—"Harriet! who on earth cut off that lock of hair just in sight?" "I did, Mamma, to give to my brother James, before he sailed for India." "How in-con siderate! Have you forgotten that, the season after next, you are going to town to be presented; and that it takes two years for a ringlet to grow properly? I am exceedingly dis-pleased with you. Well, don't cry; that won't remedy the matter; and, perhaps, before you come out, ringlets may be out of fashion." The season and its balls are, in short, the Mahomedan heaven and its houris, promised to incite the virtues of these innocent beings; till, at length, they are snatched from the governess, torn from their village schools and feminine routine of rural benevolence, and thrust into the meretricious world of London; their fair shoulders bared, their fair locks tortured, their fair minds scribbled over by the non-sense of every flirting fool;—and, amid the glare of brilliant

ball-rooms, the voluptuous harmonies of delicious orchestras, the fragrance of exotics, the rattle, the dash, the splendour, the flattery, the whirl of London, the nectar foams brightly at their lips, which is to be tasted "soberly."

And now, having had a peck at the mote in my brother's eye, and moralized my fill, at the expense of the Ronsham Greshams,—away to the Zoological; where, as it is Sunday, man and beast, with a reasonable proportion of the females of both, are waiting the good-fellowship of the public; that is, not the *very* public public. The public who privilege themselves by a payment of so much per annum, to evade the payment of so much per diem, are alone permitted to enter this Eden of Northern Marylebone on the Sabbath-day. Into sweet, fresh, grassy Kensington Gardens, on the contrary, all the unliveliered human species are free to enter; and the *beau monde* has, accordingly, taken refuge from tigers of the biped, among tigers of the quadruped species. While admiring the antics of the chimpanzee, we are supposed to be secure from contact with apes of an obscure race, or baboons of other that distinguished pedigree.

So!—a vastly agreeable morning I had provided for myself! Lord Clackmannan, who, on all days but Sundays, is busy with the cares of office, undertook to escort me, and Lady Alicia was to be our companion; when, lo! scarcely had we penetrated so far through the gay throng as the bear-pit, when Clarence managed to attach himself to the side of his fair cousin; and thenceforward I might have been at the bottom of the pit, for any thing the anxious, vigilant father cared to the contrary. We were too many to walk together; and as there was no chance that the marquess would relinquish Alicia's arm under such circumstances, I accepted the offered civilities of George Hanton, and left Lord Clackmannan to her guardianship.

Now, as to the arm of Mr. Hanton, I protest I took it with as much indifference as I should have taken that of "Sare Delafals," or any other equally uninteresting individual. I scarcely knew who was beside me, as I amused myself with the passing groups of the highly unselect select, and reflected within myself, that an *air endimanché* is fifty times more vulgar in a gentlewoman than in the grocer's wife on whom gentlewomen waste their wit; when, lo! no sooner had we passed the tunnel, than, following the motley multitude towards the elephant's enclosure, we lost sight of Lord Clackmannan. I noticed the fact to my companion, but as a matter of indifference; for her father was chaperon enough for Lady Alicia; and as to any feeling of consciousness at finding myself alone with George Hanton, I should as soon have shrunk from a *tête-à-tête* with my grandfather.

"How horrible to watch that monster's voracity!" said he, after we had stopped for a minute to contemplate the showers

of cakes and gingerbread swallowed by the elephant : "how thankful one ought to be to Providence, for bestowing upon ourselves discrimination of palate!" And, having uttered this pious apostrophe, he drew me onwards to an enclosure containing some animals apparently out of zoological fashion,—tapirs, or I scarcely know what,—against the palings of which he resolutely fixed me; so resolutely, that I scarcely knew what to make of a certain pressure of the arm which accompanied the movement.

"It gratifies me very much," he began, "that the number of weeks during which my present intentions have been made manifest, must secure me, in your eyes, from all appearance of a disrespectful precipitancy; but now, my dear Mrs. Delaval, that we seem at last so perfectly to understand each other, I see no reason why we should longer defer those mutual acknowledgments, which ought to precede all other preliminaries between us."

I was literally dumb with astonishment. He was as likely to meet with an answer from *me*, as from the tapirs that were routing their long noses at us through the palings.

"In those secondary points, however," added he, "I flatter myself I need anticipate little contrariety. My income amounts to five-and-twenty hundred a-year—yours, I fancy, to something more—(more than double, of which he was well aware!)—and I have a comfortable, well-situated house, which we need only re-furnish, to render it all you can wish. Our habits of life, in other respects, assimilate. We are both fond of society—both of the same tastes and modes of thinking; for, though I have not yet the honour to be admitted familiarly to your house, I have had much pleasure in learning from my friend, Clarence, that your table and *chef* are among the best in London. (Our 'modes of *thinking*!') Under these circumstances, I feel our mutual felicity to be secure. Our fortune, though not large, is sufficient for two persons possessed of a capital house in town for the season, who spend the remainder of the year with their friends, and are not ambitious of a family. An occasional winter at Paris, or autumn at Spa, or Carlsbad, might vary the scene; and as we should command the best society, and"—

"Stay!" cried I, as one of the long-nosed beasts made a direct attack upon my instep, which seemed to restore me to my recollection; "I am very wrong to allow you to proceed in this way when—"

"No, no! you are every thing that is good and kind. Believe me, I fully appreciate your motives in permitting me to give free interpretation to my sentiments; (his *sentiments*!) and you must suffer me to congratulate myself that—"

"I am not aware that you have any cause for self-gratulation," said I, growing angry; "for—"

"Your amiable modesty may look upon the thing in that

point of view," persisted my admirer ; " but believe me, that, although I have had hundreds of opportunities of allying myself most advantageously during the last few seasons,—though, in fact, the dowager Duchess of Hampshire nearly forced her daughter, *Lady Ellen*, upon me last autumn in the Highlands,—while the persecution I bore for years from *Lady Katharine* and her daughter has become a matter of history,—still, I assure you, I do not entertain the smallest ambition of forming a higher connexion than with yourself."

" It therefore vexes me the more," said I, determined to be heard, " that my own feelings on the subject"—

But vain was my attempt to be explicit. We had now reached the bird-houses ; and, from the circle of delighted auditors listening to the *gentillesse*s of the pink cockatoo, who was sidling on his stand in the sunshine, a whole party of the Beresfords caught sight of me, and in a minute I was surrounded ; my arm still inclosed in that of *George Hanton*, and exposed to the high-pressure of his tender gratitude. The usual ejaculations followed—" Isn't this a doat of a bird?" " Quite a darling!" " Such a dear, nice creature!" " Pretty Poll!" " Cocoa ready?" " Did you stay out the ballet last night?" " Couldn't get my carriage up. Stupid old coachman—been in the family these thirty years—must get rid of him!" " Pretty Poll!" " Wasn't *Fanny Elsler* divine in that *pas de trois*?" " God save great *George*, our king!" " La! ma! what an old parrot it *must* be—it says, God save King *George*?" " My dear, parrots is like hoaks—they lives a hage vich is a *great* hage. Don't you remember when you studied hornithology along with *Miss Sycamore*?" " Yes, ma!" " Heavens! *Mrs. Delaval*—did you hear that woman? And they pretend that the society here on Sundays is select!" " Take care—my dear *Lady Alicia*, take care—parrots are as insidious as monkeys. That creature is making for your shoulder." " Do you remember what old *Lady Burlington* said when her macaw bit a piece out of her friend's arm—' I hope to Heavén it won't make the poor dear creature sick !'" " Naughty Poll!" &c. &c.

In short, I had gradually rejoined *Alicia* and her father ; and there was no immediate opportunity for resuming my odious explanations. *Mr. Hanton* wore the impertinent smile of a favoured lover ; and, could any thing have increased the ugliness of a face so vulgar, so common, so unintellectual, he would have been more than usually disgusting.

We were soon joined by *Lord Lancaster* and *Lord Hilton*, and loitered about the gardens with the Beresfords, making the same sapient remarks uttered there Sunday after Sunday ; such as—" What a vastly conjugal couple!" " Who? *Mr. and Mrs. William C.*?" " No! that pair of blue and buff macaws! What a fate ; to be caged in eternal fidelity, as an example for ladies and gentlemen!" " How those chamois remind one of *Chamouny*! Dear *Switzerland*!—*Lord Hilton*,

were you ever in Switzerland? How enchanting it would be passing this hot day in a *châlet*, in one of those delicious valleys! Switzerland is quite my passion. I mean to go to Lady Rossana's *fête costumée* as an *Appenzelloise*." "Is Lady Rossana going to give a *bal costumé*?" "Haven't you your card?" "No. A fancy-ball!—How Irish! how vulgar! Always wanting to do something out of the common way." "Shall I get you invited?" "Thank you. Yes—I suppose one must be there." "La! ma! what's that bird as big as a turkey, what sits so sulky on its perch?" "An eagle." "Bill, I say, yonder great beast's an eagle." "What's a heagle? I never seed a heagle." "You naughty boy! Don't you remember the Spread Eagle, opposite uncle John's, in Gracechurch Street?" "Just listen to those ignorant barbarians!" "And then, people talk of the diffusion of knowledge, and the advantage of penny libraries! Do let us go, Lady Evelyn, and see the kangaroos swallow their young." "Do they really swallow them?" "To be sure—I have seen them a thousand times."

We were leaving the gardens at a quarter before eight, to dress for dinner. Lord Clackmannan's carriage coming round first, he and Lady Alicia left me to the care of Lords Lancaster and Hilton, Mr. Hanton retaining the most obstinate possession of my arm; all three talking and laughing loud, by way, I suppose, of making themselves conspicuous: when, lo! in walked Herbert, arm-in-arm with Lord Hartston. Instead of stopping, my brother-in-law touched his hat to me with the most provoking air of superciliousness: his companion looked pointedly away.

"My friend, Hartston, is growing the greatest of great men," said Hanton, impertinently. "He has never lost the air with which he used to declaim, on Harrow speech-day, 'My name is Caius Marcius!'"

"I cannot laugh at Hartston," replied Lord Hilton, with more good sense than I expected from him. "Hartston is an honour to the times, and the hope of the country. I am always willing to take off my hat to Hartston as low as he pleases."

"Probably he pleases little or nothing about the matter," muttered Hanton, putting me into my carriage, with a look and smile of most provoking significance. And, as I turned off into the ring, there stood the ugly creature, affecting to watch me out of sight, while Lord Lancaster and Lord Hilton planted themselves behind him, bursting with laughter at his affected attitude of sentimentality. As I was pretty sure of meeting the wretch, if I pursued my intention of going, as usual, to Arlington Street, I resolved to stay at home, and after dinner, despatch to his "well-situated mansion," a letter expressive of regret, that I should have given him sufficient encouragement to mislead him into proposals which, for reasons unnecessary to explain, I begged to decline.

At one o'clock in the morning, probably after his return from the marchioness's, just as I was preparing to retire to bed, drives the following cool, impudent, disingenuous answer.

"**MY DEAR MRS. DELAVAL**,—I am at a loss to conjecture what part of our conversation this morning you can have so completely misinterpreted as to suppose me bold enough to aspire to the honour of your hand; more particularly as I incied it was known to all the world, that I am any thing but a marrying man. Hoping this little *mésentendu* will produce no change in the friendly feelings between us, I have the honour to be your devoted servant, G. HANTON.

Monday.—Too cross, all day, to write a syllable.

Tuesday.—Went this morning to sit with Armine, and found her busy with her usual stitchery, in a close stifling drawing-room, with a canvass-covered spelling-book, a slate, and two greasy-looking weekly account-books, lying near her work-box. How mortifying to see my elegant-minded sister tumbled into a drudge!—for, after all, this milder species of drudgery is more vexatious to a proud spirit than *actual* labour; and, for the sake of a husband who so little seems to appreciate the sacrifice!

My sister's face, as she bent over her cambric muslin, seemed rather portentous. Supposing her grave looks to originate in some domestic disarrangement, I ventured to make inquiries.

"Any thing the matter?" said I.

"No, nothing the matter; only the idea of your marrying that Mr. Penrhyn vexes me."

"*My* marrying Mr. Penrhyn?"

"Herbert, you know, so particularly dislikes him, that I fear the marriage will cause an estrangement among us. No doubt you are better acquainted with his merits, and judge him more truly than we do; but"—

"Pray let me interrupt you by inquiring what makes you suppose I have any idea of forming such an alliance?"

"Oh, Herbert and Lord Hartston say that you cannot be otherwise than engaged to him; that you *ought*, in fact, to be engaged to him!"

"They do me too much honour by taking so deep an interest in my affairs. But I beg leave to differ from them. I am *not* engaged to Mr. Penrhyn."

"Then why, my dear sister," cried Armine, dropping her work into her lap,—"why on earth were you seen with him alone in your carriage last week, at five o'clock in the morning?"

"Oh! are you *there*?" said I, laughing at her look of consternation; "why, because it *was* five o'clock in the morning, bright sunshiny morning, light and public as noon day. I remained much later than usual at Almack's, and Mr. Penrhyn, who put me into the carriage, asked me, in all humility, 'take him home, as he could not find his cabriolet. Perhaps

it would have been wiser to propose sending back the carriage when it had left me in St. James's place; but in pity to his thin shoes and tired face, I at once consented to set him down in Albemarle Street. As we passed the steps of Crockford's, Lord Lancaster and half a dozen of the *élite* of the *roués* were standing on the steps,—smoking, laughing, and quizzing all who went by; from the squeaking chimney-sweepers to the gay people from Almack's. Penrhyn nodded to these men, as we took our turn in the ordeal; and, it appears, we were not *quittes pour la peur*. The wretches have chosen to make mischief."

"It is very much to be lamented," observed Armine, gravely, "that so trifling an indiscretion should be the means of uniting you to a man of whom the best judges entertain so ill an opinion."

"You almost provoke me into taking up his defence!" cried I. "Do you suppose that I am to be frightened into accepting Mr. Penrhyn because such people as Mr. Herbert and Lord Hartston decides that my reputation requires mending?"

Armine reddened in her turn. "My husband has a true affection for you, Harriet; and Herbert assures me this silly adventure has made you the talk of the clubs."

"A proof of what trivialities their conversation must consist. I wonder so wise a man as Mr. Herbert can make up his mind to pass a large portion of his life among such empty gossips."

"Nevertheless, the clubs give the tone to London conversation. The politician, the country gentlemen, the literary man, the connoisseur, the dandy, each has his peculiar club, at which the chief subject in which he is interested forms the leading topic of conversation. And, just as people believe a ministerial rumour circulated at Brookes's, they will believe a scandalous story emanating from Crockford's."

"But I see no scandal in the matter. Mr. Penrhyn sat three minutes and a half in my chariot, with the windows down, in open daylight. Where is the crime of such a circumstance?"

"It is contrary to etiquette. A young woman and young man, seen together in such a position are naturally supposed to be under engagement to each other. It will not do, my dear Harriet, to brave the opinion of the world. Remember that disregard of etiquette lost Maria Antoinette her throne, her life; it may lose you —"

"My reputation!—Yes! you really mean to infer that, after five and twenty years of prudent conduct, my good name is injured by taking a man home from Almack's! What intolerable nonsense!"

"Forgive me if I have offended you; but I thought it right you should be aware that all the world is talking of your marriage with Mr. Penrhyn."

"For all the world, read Mr. Herbert and his old-maidish friend, Lord Hartston. My compliments to both, and tell them

I shall invite into my carriage whom I please, and at whatever hour may suit me. And now let us talk of something else."

Our next subject was not much more agreeable than the preceding one. Herbert has resolved to leave London on the first of July; and I have, therefore, only another fortnight to enjoy of Armine's society. She is still eager that I should fulfil my promise of passing a month or two of the autumn with them in Bedfordshire, and still confident of my acquiescence: but I cannot bear the thoughts of becoming an inmate under the same roof with Herbert, more especially a roof where his authority prevails. I am sure we should disagree.

Just as the carriage was turning down Brook Street, after I left my sister, it was suddenly stopped, and Herbert himself appeared at the window.

"I wish you joy!" said he, with one of his bitterest sneers.

"Thank you!" I replied, resolved not to gratify him by inquiring the cause of his felicitations.

"Ah! you had heard it already? I was in hopes, I should be the first person to convey the joyful tidings."

"What joyful tidings?" cried I, startled out of my resolution.

"The death of Lord Penrhyn. I have just come from the club. The old man died at eight this morning; leaving a clear rent-roll of seventy thousand a-year, four magnificent country houses, and one in town. You are in luck! I wish you good morning."

My unexpressed wishes for *him* were far less amiable; but resolved not to appear disconcerted, I kissed my hand as the carriage drove on. I was going to Smith's, for the purpose of getting a bracelet mended; and, while giving my orders, in came Lady Mardynville; who, instead of pursuing her business, whatever it might be—if, indeed, she had any but to be disagreeable—began curtseying and simpering with such an enormous accession of deference, that I am convinced she has heard the false report of my marriage, and the true one of Lord Penrhyn's death. Terrified lest she should accost me with congratulations before all the shopmen, which would spread the story from one end of London to the other, I talked so fast and so confusedly to Smith about the snap of my stupid bracelet, that *he* must have thought me bewitched, while *she*, doubtless, believed me to be giving orders for a *rivière* of brilliants. At last I hurried away, as if making off with some of the trinkets I had been turning over.

In what a curious position have I involved myself! Here am I condemned by the voice of the world to marry, by way of penance, a man, the very idea of whose importance has set Lady Mardynville's knees bobbing! Seventy thousand a-year! And I, who am thought so rich, and who find myself so rich, with *six*! What might one not do with so classical an income! What might one not do *for* it, except marry an unprincipled heartless man like Mr. Penrhyn? I beg his

pardon, Lord Penrhyn. To be sure, every one is not so prejudiced against him as Herbert. I know many houses where he is a great favourite. At the time Mrs. Percy exposed herself on his account, no one seemed to think it extraordinary; and certainly his prospects of fortune could have nothing to do with *her engouement*. Now, of course, every one will think him charming; so that the applauses of the world will, for the future, go for nothing. To-morrow, Ascot with Lady Cecilia.

Friday.—I prefer Ascot a thousand times to Epsom. The road is less rural, but more amusing. The rabble-rout, inseparable from a race-course, is, at Ascot, a rustic, at Epsom, a swell mob; the company is more select; and, above all, the presence of royalty dignifies the affair. The prickers in scarlet liveries, who keep the ground, give an air of courtliness to the place; and one feels to be in the near neighbourhood of

The forest, Windsor, and thy green retreats.

Lady Cis was not in spirits. She should not attempt such exertions; for public places of all kinds are her abhorrence; and she is the least locomotive person in the world. No one can be a more charming *causeuse*: but, to converse like her sex, she must be sitting in her own chair, with her feet on her own footstool, her own lapdog on the sofa near her, and her own *sachet* of *márechale* powder lying on the table by her side. Her mind is so *acclimaté* to her boudoir, that elsewhere she becomes absent and fretful. Yesterday, she found the day too hot, the roads too dusty; she could not arrange our parasols to her liking; and, when we arrived on the course, was distracted by the noise of tabors and fifes, and the bawling of the pea-and-thimble men; and would have it that our horses were *going to be* frightened. Her ordinary movements are so circumscribed, that she is not prepared for the common occurrences of life; and yesterday she was herself so bored, that, had it not been for Clarence, she would have ended with boring *me*. Happy they who know no other calamity in life than that of being *bored*! Yet, in this world of tortures and privations, how many of us presume to complain of *that* as of the greatest of evils.

“All the world,” was at Ascot; and Lord Clackmannen, as master of the buckhounds, or the horse, or I know not what, managed to procure us a privileged place on the course, opposite to the royal stand, where we saw “all the world” to advantage. Lady C. and Lady Alicia were with the king and queen; and Clarence had the happiness of doating upon his idol through an opera-glass the whole of the day. Lord Hartston passed us twice; and I observed the Duke of Merioneth, who was talking to us at the time, take off his hat with the deference he would have shown to a prince of the blood. What influence resides in a celebrated name! How far beyond all ordinary distinctions of rank!

I perceive that the report of my engagement to Lord Penrhyn has gained ground. The duke inquired of me when I intended to leave town for the season; then checked himself, observing, "But I beg pardon—I conclude nothing is yet settled?" Vexed by his inference, I confided my dilemma to Cecilia, who treated it as a delicate distress not worth mentioning. "Leave people to find out their mistake," said she, with her usual languid air of indifference; "or, if you like it better, convert the mistake into reality. You know I have long recommended you to marry Penrhyn."

"But, as he has never even hinted an intention of proposing"—

"Of course not. Lord Penrhyn is too much a man of the world, and knows too well his own value, to fling his hand at the head of any woman on a short acquaintance. People of his kind are seldom in a hurry to be married. It is only boys like Clarence, or old lords dropping into an estate and wanting an heir, who play the fool-hardy in such matters."

—We came back from Ascot, tired, dusty, thirsty, sunburnt, cross; and doubly cross at finding ourselves engaged to a late dinner at old Lady Burlington's. But the dinner revived us. The room was cool; the party, intelligent and chatty. I heard the dowager say to L—, who sat next her at table, "I have been moving heaven and earth this season to get that Lord Hartston; but he will not be had. I have written to him, and told him I was godmother to his grandfather; I have been at him through every living creature of his acquaintance, from his sister to his bootmaker; but the man is inflexible. I fancy he is afraid of being decoyed into one of my lion-feeds; but I hope I appreciate him better. Fox, you know, was my great friend; so was Sheridan, so was Burke, so was Fitzpatrick; and I shall go miserable to my grave, unless Lord Hartston dines with me before the season is over."

"No; pray don't die while you have so good a cook," said her neighbour, helping himself to an *épigramme de volaille pique aux crevettes*. "You only want Hartston as a novelty—in managerial phrase—to draw a good house for you. I cannot pretend to assist you, because he is my friend, and with my friends I never take liberties. But you shall have him in small change. I will procure you several stars of lesser magnitude, all newly discovered; a Pole who—"

"Not for the universe! In spite of our dear Lord Dudley, those Poles are quite *roco*."

"A Pole whose hands were worked off in the mines of Siberia. He goes about in hanging sleeves, and has trained a poodle to fetch and carry for him. I believe he was a Bedouin last season—*mais c'est égal*. Then you shall have a dandy American, talking fashion, Shakapeare, and the musical glasses, in a style to make the fortune of a Margate M.C.; and, *par supplément*, a fine lady novelist, who sends you her

new work with a little perfumed billet, begging you will ‘nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.’”

“Thank you, thank you,” cried the old lady, beginning to see through her friend’s *persiflage*, “I will not trust to you; I shall try and engage the influence of Mrs. Delaval’s bright eyes. Mrs. Delaval, my dear, are you acquainted with Lord Hartston? Yes, now I think of it, you *must* be. You both came into fashion about the same time; and I know he is *faufile* with that good-looking disagreeable, brother-in-law of yours, who lives in Park Lane.”

“New Norfolk Street,” insinuated one of her neighbours.

“Never mind where. I really wish, my dear, you would get me presented to him.”

“To my disagreeable brother-in-law?”

“No, no; the other. Tell him I have the greatest respect for him, and so forth; and that I was the friend of Fox, Burke, Windham, and so forth; and that I hope to have the honour of seeing him at dinner, either the 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th of June, or the 7th or 8th of July.”

“I am sorry to say, I have not the pleasure of knowing Lord Hartston.”

“Haven’t you? How stupid!—he would have made a charming match for you. By the way, my dear child, they say you are to marry Lord——what’s the name of the man who has that fine property in Yorkshire?”

“There are so many men who have fine property in Yorkshire.”

“But I mean that man with mines, or iron-works, or quarries, or something or other; the man who wears a great bush of hair, as if his ears had been cropped.”

“Your ladyship means, perhaps, Lord Penrhyn?” said some one, taking pity on my confusion.

“Do I? I dare say I do. Salmi,” turning to her *maitre d’hotel*, “remind me to ask Lord Penrhyn to dinner as soon as his grandfather has been dead a fortnight.” And, fortunately for me, in the discursiveness of her ideas, she had already forgotten the matter which brought him on the tapis. “I will have the Percies to meet him. And now, *mes bons amis*, that the ices are on the table, I give you all leave to talk about Ascot. Had I not interdicted the subject during dinner, I should have heard of nothing else; and I detest races. I have not been to a race these sixty years.”

Friday.—How odiously provoking! When the *Morning Post* was brought me at breakfast, so little did I imagine it could contain any thing of personal interest to myself, that I ran through a whole column about Ascot, before I was attracted by a paragraph headed “THE LATE LORD PENRHYN,” beginning with an account of his “crimson Genoa velvet coffin, with silver-gilt handles and plate;” and ending with, “We learn that the present Lord, who is in his forty-first year, is about to lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Mrs. Delaval, widow of Colonel Delaval, of Delaval Castle,

and daughter to the late distinguished General Sir Richard Montresor, K. B."

I am now, indeed, perplexed. If I send a denial to the newspaper, Lord Penrhyn may say, "Mrs. Delaval might have waited till she was asked;" while, if I allow the assertion to remain unnoticed, the fact will be admitted as certain. I know not whom to consult. Herbert is so ungracious on the subject; and Lady Cecilia considers every thing so unimportant that does not relate either to herself or Clarence. I foresee that I shall be exposed to all sorts of annoyances by this foolish history. It would not surprise me to receive a letter in the course of the day from Lady Mardynville, asking me to stand godmother to her next child!

How the season brightens! I expected that, by this time, my gaieties would a little relax; instead of which, this morning has brought cards for four balls, two breakfasts, and a *fête costumée*. Dissipation seems to grow with what it feeds on; and, now the intoxication of pleasure has become fairly epidemic, all calculation, all moderation, is thrown aside. No one has a moment for reflection. The vigils of the ball over-night leave one scarcely time to dress in the morning for the business of the day, viz., visits and the Park. Then another toilet, and a dinner party; then another, and more balls. The sound of an orchestra is perpetually in one's ears; and full dress so habitual, that I shall scarcely know myself again in "white linen." I should like a week's quiet, and then a recommencement. The six *months'* quiet which really *will* follow all this stir and sparkling, does not seem altogether so desirable. I am now so accustomed to live in a crowd, that I dread "the clock and crickets," which sound so loud in the stillness of a dull home.

Saturday.—Verily, I have my revenge for the insolent, sneering bow with which George Hanton passed me the other day in the Park; and which was intended less for me than for Lord Lancaster and Sir Jervis Hall, with whom he was riding; *ample revenge!* Yesterday, as I was on a variety visit to Mrs. Hemstitch (the mantua-maker who formerly read me such a lecture on fine-ladyism), I met, on the stairs, a fine lad of about fifteen, his eyes swollen out of his head with crying. As the good woman happened to be alone, I asked her, indiscreetly enough, whether the youth was her son, and what was the cause of his tribulation.

"*My sons, madam, are at decent schools, and, I trust, in decent clothing,*" said she, proudly. "If you had examined that poor lad, you would have perceived him to be almost in rags. He is in affliction for his father, who is dying in one of my attics."

"Do you let lodgings?" said I, as inconsiderately as before.

"No, madam; I simply afford a miserable refuge to an indigent family.—Have you any orders for me this morning?"

"Pray forgive me, if I have offended you," I persisted:

"but you have now excited my interest. Are these poor people in a situation to which I can afford any—any alleviation?"

"If you mean in the way of charity, I believe, madam, that the most trifling sum would be highly acceptable. I am working for a large family of my own, and, consequently, unable to do much for them. I provide them with food and medicine, but the poor old gentleman will soon require a funeral. It ought to be a decent one, for he is a clergyman of the Church of England."

As she perceived by my countenance that I was now deeply interested, I persuaded her to relate the whole melancholy history. The dying man, it seems, served for many years the curacy of her native place, and eked out a small salary by taking pupils. The state of the times, sickness in his family, and, at length, a paralytic attack, threw him into distress. He was obliged to leave his cure; and, from trouble to trouble, became an inmate of the Fleet prison.

"At the commencement of poor Mr. Forster's distresses, madam," said Mrs. Hemstitch, addressing me, "I took his daughter to learn my business; a very excellent, intelligent girl, much beloved in my establishment. The debt for which her father was taken up, was a small one; and she was in hopes that one or other of his former pupils would release him. I even wrote a letter for her to one of them (a rich gentleman, of the name of Hanton), stating the circumstances. He refused, however; saying, that he did not consider it his business to repair the improvidence of others: at last, the sum was made up among my young people. With my husband's leave, I took in the poor gentleman and his son, who were totally destitute; and for eight months past they have been my inmates. The lad is a fine, well-taught, scholarly lad, and might make his way in the world, if any one would lend him a helping hand. Many and many a lady among my customers might, with a single word, place him in a situation to earn a livelihood. But one or two to whom I presumed to apply, and who can be courteous enough when they are anxious to have a dress finished by a particular hour, or the sending off of their bill postponed, answered me so harshly, that I was discouraged. I was stupid enough, however, to write again to Mr. George Hanton in favour of the lad, who is his godson; and he offered to employ him in his stables! Employ the son of his gray-headed tutor in his stables!—when, as Caroline Forster said, her father and mother had sat up with him night after night, when he was a sickly youth; and, so far as he knows in the world, he is indebted to the labours of the poor curate. Such, madam, is the great world!—Have you any orders for me this morning?"

My orders, of course, regarded the Forster family. Thank Heaven, I have now an honest excuse to myself for the contempt with which I have always regarded George Hanton.

—So?—half-a-dozen letters of congratulation on my

proaching marriage to Lord Penrhyn! It is easy to write and contradict the report; but I am beginning to feel seriously annoyed by the predicament in which I am placed. I learn from the newspapers, that the late lord is to be conveyed to-morrow to the family vault; after which, I conclude, *my* lord will make his re-appearance in public, and, of course, save me the trouble of further vindication. Considering the intimate terms on which we stand, perhaps it would be better if I at once frankly alluded to the report. He might, however, imagine it a *ruse* to bring on a proposal—men are such cox-combs. There lives not the one to whom I would again sacrifice myself in marriage; or *I*, at least, have not at present the honour of his acquaintance.

If the affairs of Cupid do not flourish in *my* establishment, I suspect they are proceeding with much alacrity *chez mes voisines*. Signor Bravura's cabriolet is no longer the only one stationed at the door of Mr. Gresham Ronsham. From twelve o'clock till three, a vehicle of that flash-dandy description which makes one suspect it to be hired for the season is in constant attendance. As soon as the family-coach rumbles off, on its daily round of visitationing and park-grinding, off gallops the cabriolet, as never well-bred cabriolet was heard to gallop; and at seven o'clock, so soon as the well-inhabited quarters of the town begin to send forth fumes of soup and patties, back gallops it again; and a hero, with well-dyed whiskers and mustachios, and well-varnished shoes, leaps out, leaps in, and the ding-dong of the dinner-bell commences. When I return home at night from a party, if lights are still burning in the drawing-room of the Gresham Ronshams, the galloping horse is sure to be pawing impatiently at the Gresham Ronshams' door; strong symptoms of a courtship in the family! and, from a little feverish, anxious patch of red on the cheek of the second daughter, I suspect Miss Augusta to be the favoured Dulcinea. I must inquire of Lady Farrington; and, as I never find a syllable to say to her when we meet, the subject will be a *trouvable*.

—How good,—how very good of him! I mentioned the story of the Forster family to Herbert, with the view of procuring his advice and assistance in disposing of the poor boy, when released from attendance on his father; and my brother-in-law promised to think the matter over, and in a week let me know the result of his cogitations.

To-day, I went to Mrs. Hemstitch, ostensibly to order a gown, but in reality to learn the state of the old man, without the ostentation of playing the benefactress. I did not intend to proceed immediately to the subject,—the good woman is so blunt and strange! But the moment she could get rid of the dowager Duchess of Hampshire, who was trying to persuade her to make a dress with seven breadths out of eight yards of Sewell and Cross's cheap narrow satin, she hurried to me with a face so radiant with joy, and such a profusion of thanks, that I hardly knew what to make of her.

"Such a provision! such a windfall! so much above the poor boy's expectations—though certainly not above his deserts. I am sure, madam, I am as grateful as if it were a son of my own. As to poor Caroline Forster, she has been crying for joy all night, and the old gentleman seems quite revived. He wants to get up and be dressed, but the apothecary has forbid it."

By degrees I obtained an explanation. Yesterday morning, George Forster was sent for to Lord Hartston's office in Whitehall, and examined for two hours by the secretary, as to his proficiency in writing, accounts, and summing up abstracts. He was desired to return at six o'clock, when he had an interview with Lord Hartston himself, and the welcome intelligence that he was appointed to a clerkship of seventy pounds a-year, in an office holding out prospects of advancement. "Your salary will commence from this day," said his lordship; "your duties, when I find it expedient to give you notice. At present they will be performed by a young man attached to my own establishment."

How I long to thank him for the considerateness with which he has performed this benevolent action! But I keep stern guard over myself, and will not be betrayed by my feelings into what he may fancy an attempt to deprecate the ill opinion he has formed of me. Meanwhile, *libre a moi* to feel as grateful as I please.

—Among the few persons in society whom I really dislike, are Lord Lancaster's mother and sisters. They are all three handsome and clever; but steeped to the lips in persuasion of their own superiority. They have instituted themselves sole priestesses of the temple of fashion; and such pretensions render them at once uneasy and disagreeable. They cannot at all times secure the worship of a foreign prince or a Duke of Merioneth; and to the lesser great they are so uncertain, so supercilious, that nothing can exceed their unpopularity. The inaffability of the two girls is already beginning to assume a pinched, scoured, discontented turn of countenance, which has made them old before their time. I meet these people frequently at the Duke's, at Lady Clackmannan's, and other elect places; but have been careful to avoid seeming to seek their acquaintance; for they have a way of fixing upon one a stony unrecognizing look, intended to mark the most pre-eminent contempt.

To-day, to my great amazement, as I was writing notes in my drawing-room, "Mrs. Percy and Lady Maria Lancaster" were announced; and, without any further attempt at introduction, I received from the latter a very gracious curtsey. I could by no means understand the visit: for Mrs. Percy has scarcely made her appearance here for the last month; or, to speak more correctly, from the time Lord Penrhyn began to pay me attention.

"Is not this a pretty house?" said Mrs. Percy, addressing her companion as soon as they were seated.

Lady Maria raised her eye-glass, glanced round the room, and muttered a scarcely intelligible—"Very!"

"Quite like one of Giroux's baby-houses!"

Another glance, and another faint "Very!"

"One longs to put it all under a glass shade."

Another glance—no answer.

"And such exquisite flowers! One fancies oneself at *la marche aux fleurs!*"

A smile—no answer.

"I am rather out of conceit with my flowers to-day," said I, determined to take some part in the conversation, "Colville seems to think that any plant, if forced and out of season, *must* be acceptable. Certainly we are glad to have violets in February, mignonette in March, and moss-roses in April. But when they send me dwarf dahlias in June, it provokes me exceedingly. One does not wish to be reminded of the autumn a day earlier than is necessary; and a dahlia is, at all times, a frightful, scentless thing for a drawing-room."

"You have so much poetical sensibility!" sneered Mrs. Percy. "For my part, I can content myself with a flower-pot and green leaves, a bush of old-man, or a daffy-down-dilly. I don't *pretend* to know one flower from another. They all serve to fill up a conservatory or a garden; and, when well imitated by Batton, look equally charming in one of Herbaul's *paille-de-riz* hats. Don't you think so, Lady Maria?"

Lady Maria smiled approvingly, but uttered no audible answer.

"Whom have you next door to you, Mrs. Delaval? I declare I hear somebody screeching "*Dove-sono*," half a tone too high! What a neighbour to suffer under! Do listen, Lady Maria—how dreadful!"

"Very!"

"If I were in your unfortunate case, Mrs. Delaval, I would put down straw, and protest that somebody in the house had a brain-fever, to silence the people."

"In London one is obliged to bear and forbear with one's neighbour."

"Do you know that Lady Evelyn Beresford ties up her knocker the moment *hers* come to town; and if she hears they are going to have a concert, sends in Sir Henry Halford's compliments, and he will not answer for the consequences. I beg your pardon, Lady Maria, for now I remember Lady Evelyn is your cousin."

"Is she?"

"Of course she is. Old Lord Rockwell's daughter, you know."

"We do not visit her."

At this moment, to my great annoyance, the servants announced Lady Mardynville. The woman has no right to call on me, for I have never intruded upon *her*; and when she curtseyed into the room, I felt convinced she would try to

fasten her acquaintance on Lady Maria Lancaster, or commit me in some other way, equally provoking. While she gabbed through her opening compliments, Mrs. Percy and her friend sat exchanging looks of disgust; more particularly when she suddenly launched into certain family histories—of her son, Ernest Augustus, having won the rowing match at Eton; and her little boy, William Henry, having the chicken-pox, which made her very uneasy, on account of her daughters, Adelaide Ida, and Sophia Matilda.

“But, my dear Mrs. Delaval,” cried she, suddenly interrupting herself, and looking round as if to ascertain that none but friends were present, “I must not forget that I came here expressly to offer you my congratulations.”

“On what account?” said I, resolved not to appear too readily conscious.

“Oh, my dear madam! it is impossible you can affect ignorance, when all London is talking of it.”

“If you allude,” said I, gaining courage, “to an idle paragraph, which appeared in one of the morning papers, allow me to assure you that it is as groundless as such reports generally prove to be.”

“You quite surprise me!” cried Lady Mardynville, trying to look arch; “for, I assure you, when I complimented Lady Cecilia Delaval last night, at the Ancient Concert, she did not affect to deny it.”

“She probably did not think it worth while,” said I, vexed to notice the significant smiles passing between the Percy and Lady Maria; “being aware that no one has given it a moment’s credit.”

“And then, your brother-in-law, Mr. Herbert—I stopped him yesterday, as he was going into Arthur’s; and he answered my felicitations by saying, jokingly, that, whenever the ceremony took place, I should officiate as one of the bridesmaids.”

Again, Lady Maria executed a languid smile.

“Are you going to the Duke of Merioneth’s to-morrow?” said I to Mrs. Percy, hoping to change the conversation; but Lady Mardynville had already begun another speech.

“But, my dear Mrs. Delaval, what will you say, when I tell you that Lord Penrhyn’s old aunt, Mrs. Margaret Penrhyn, goes about telling every one that the family are quite enchanted with the match; for that her nephew had an unfortunate *liaison* with some married woman, to which his own marriage would, of course, put an end.”

“I should say, that Mrs. Margaret Penrhyn knew even less of her nephew’s affairs than the rest of the world,” I replied. Then, scarcely daring to look Mrs. Percy in the face, I renewed my question about the Duke of M.

“I believe there is nothing at Merioneth House to-morrow night?” said she, coolly addressing Lady Maria.

“Nothing,” replied her ladyship, calmly.

"Nothing at Merioneth *House*," I persisted; "but the duke gives a small *dejeuner* at his villa."

"You are mistaken," said Lady Maria, with a smile of contemptuous superiority.

"It is some *dejeuner* at Lady Sittingbourne's; and people have made confusion," said Mrs. Percy.

"No; the *dejeuner* is at Hazlebank," said I, calmly.

"The duke was half an hour in our box, at the French play, last night. I assure you he has no breakfast to-morrow at Hazlebank, or elsewhere," retorted Lady Maria.

Turning to my writing-table, I now quietly placed in her ladyship's hands a billet, containing the following lines:—

"Pray, my dear Mrs. Delaval, do not disappoint me of the pleasure of your company on Thursday next. I shall breakfast at Hazlebank at four,—*en petit comte*, my own family, the Clackmannans, Rossanas, Campo-Fioritos, all our own set. Faithfully yours,

"MERIONETH."

Lady Maria looked aghast, Mrs. Percy indignant.

"What an absurd arrangement!" cried she. "A breakfast at four o'clock to spoil your dinner; and an afternoon spent in talking *Pastor Fido* among the roses and lilies."

"I am so fond of plants, that I could not pass my time more agreeably."

"How very delightful!" ejaculated Lady Mardynville, who had remained dumb during our dispute. "What an enjoyable little party! Nothing I have more at heart than to make his grace's acquaintance. Sir Robert has an estate in Ireland adjoining *his*, which, of course, must make us perfectly known to him by name; but it happens that I have never had an opportunity of being presented to the Duke of Merioneth, in a manner that would accord with our mutual position in the world."

Lady Maria put up her glass, and stared, as she had formerly done at my room, at the strange woman,—so strange as to be unacquainted with his grace of Merioneth; the strange woman probably entertaining a similar degree of contempt for the party, in whose box his grace could sit for half an hour without honouring them by an invitation to his breakfast. It was a great relief to me when the trio rose to go away. Lord Lancaster quitted Mrs. Crowhurst's side to-day in the Park (who, to do her justice, *does* look like an angel on horseback,) to take a turn with me; when I mentioned to him that, *a propos* of the skies falling, his sister, Lady Maria, had done me the honour of a visit.

"Called upon you with Mrs. Percy?" he reiterated. "I wonder what impertinence was on the *tapis* between them? Beware of them! Maria and Mrs. Percy would play Mrs. Candour and Lady Sneerwell better than any actresses that ever graced the stage."

Amiable enough on *his* part to speak thus of his sister.

The Lancasters seem quite a nest of *cobras di manillas*—a sting like the prick of a pin, but venomously fatal.

After dinner, before dressing for Almack's, I went and sat an hour with Cecilia, who is what she calls "nervous;" that is, out of humour. She fancies the Clackmannans suspect her of encouraging her son's attachment to his cousin Alicia: "Although my sister ought to be well aware," she observes, "that the thing is wholly in opposition to my principles. I disapprove of cousins intermarrying."

"From a religious scruple?"

"Religious nonsense! No! Because such matches are fatal to the extension of family connexion. Then Clarence is poor, and must marry an heiress; and Alicia has pretensions of the highest order, and ought not to marry any thing under a peerage. An alliance between them would be ruin to both: and it is all my sister Clackmannan's fault, who chose to let them go on billing and cooing like two canary-birds in a cage, year after year, at Clackmannan Court; till the two silly creatures fancied they must be intended for a pair. I am always reproving my son,—always watching him, always tormenting him and myself. I see how it will be!—I shall be worn out before the season is over; and there will be an eternal *brouillerie* between the Clackmannans and myself. My dear Harriet, see what you can do for me with the young people."

"Why not send Clarence abroad, as you intended?"

"Send him! Clarence will be of age next month. Can I pack him up like a portmanteau and dispatch him to Paris against his will? He positively declares he will not leave England till he has come to some arrangement with Alicia. There will be a clandestine engagement, a family *esclandre*, and I shall die of one of my nervous attacks."

And nothing but a dose of æther preserved her from a fit of hysterics on the spot. By degrees, however, we began to talk of other things;—the breakfast at Hazlebank,—the Lancasters,—Mrs. Crowhurst,—and, at length, I tried to persuade her to dress and accompany me to Almack's.

"Dress!—how can you be so *inconsequente*? I am horribly ill. I have been sitting in my *peignoir* all day. I have not even had the blinds up. I have not seen a creature except Halford. Dress! I could just as soon ascend Mont Blanc."

"But you will have an opportunity of seeing how things go on between Clarence and his cousin."

"My dear child, I *do know* how things go between Clarence and his cousin."

"But if the duke is there, he will probably ask you to Hazlebank, and you are so fond of a *partie de campagne*!"

"Yes, but not at a few hours' notice. The great pleasure of those things is a *demi-toilette bien fraîche*, and very striking. There is no surer criterion of taste than a pretty *demi-toilette*. And I really have nothing new for to-morrow. No! pray don't talk about dressing. What o'clock is it?"

"Not ten,—you have plenty of time. Ring and give orders to Gabrielle."

"Impossible—quite impossible. My nerves are perfectly shattered. I am not even sure that I have a ticket. I have not been there this fortnight. Is this the first of a new subscription?"

"No; the last of an old one. I know you have one. Let me look in your engagement-box. See! here it is. I shall ring for Gabrielle, and come back and fetch you at eleven."

"Pray, do not torment me! Even if I dress, I shall never be able to go. Do you know if my sister is to be there?"

"Yes; she begged me to meet her at eleven."

"Well, I shall make the effort, to please *you*. I am always making efforts for the satisfaction of others. Perhaps I may be able to stay half an hour. To say the truth, I rather want to see Lord Wincham or Lord Hartston, without writing to them to come here. I have been thinking it might be possible to get Clarence an *attache-ship* at Naples or Constantinople; and one is sure of meeting the ministers at Almack's."

At eleven, accordingly, I called for her; and never saw her look better or more captivating. The moment the Duke of Merioneth came in, she carried him off to one of the upper benches, where no one was likely to interfere with her, in the way she has of appropriating people without any appearance of design; and so successful were her little *agaceries*, that in ten minutes she had not only accomplished an invitation for herself and Clarence to the breakfast, but could have procured one for Lady Mardynville, or any other obnoxious individual, had she been so inclined. While they were chatting together, Mrs. Crowhurst, who affects to palliate her impertinences under a character of originality, sauntered towards them, saying, "Duke, I find you have a *dejeuner*, to which no one is to be invited; which makes me, of course, determine to be of the party. Say 'yes,' with a good grace, and tell me how happy you shall be to see me."

"*Most* happy, on any other day; to-morrow, *pas possible*. I have no permission to extend my invitations."

"Permission? from whom?"

"That is not my secret. When you give me one to keep, you shall find me equally faithful to the trust."

And he recommenced his conversation with Lady Cecilia, in a tone that rendered it impossible for Mrs. Crowhurst to renew her attack; so away she went to flutter, "like an eagle in a dovecote," the flock of pigeons she has marked as her own among the lordlings and boy-honourables.

But my own turn was coming. I trust and believe, that nothing is more indifferent to me than the homage of such a man as Lord Penrhyn, whom I neither like nor respect; and I should, indeed, despise myself if, independent as I am, his recent accession of importance could alter my intentions towards him. Nevertheless, I must own myself deeply piqued by the line of conduct he has taken up. I did not dream of

meeting him at Almack's; it was hardly decent, I think, that he should appear at a ball so soon after his grandfather's interment. In these times, few men care for their grandfather's; but, *les bienséances avant tout!* We parted intimate friends. He was with me in St. James's Place an hour one morning after that unlucky drive from Almack's; chatty, agreeable, *empresse* as usual,—if not quite a declared lover, as nearly so as possible. He came to our box at the opera, on the Saturday night, and sat there a fixture, *comme à l'ordinaire*. On the Monday, Lord Penrhyn died, and of course I saw no more of him.

Last night, at Almack's, having just finished a waltz with my little cousin Clarence, I was proceeding on his arm into the tea-room, when in the doorway, sable-suited as night, or an inheriting peer, stood his lordship. I expected he would extend his hand as usual *en passant*, and almost feared I put out mine to meet it, when, lo! a baw, as frozen and distant as from the Duke of —— to a new made baronet! I was staggered, and only the more amazed when I saw, that by his side stood his friend, the Crocodile, *bouche béante*! mouth, eyes, and ears, as usual wide open, who has probably circulated the history, by this time, through White's, Crockford's, and the Travellers'.

Lord Penrhyn remained at the ball as long or longer than I did, but never once approached within miles of me. He danced only with Lady Sophia Rossana, and talked only to her family. But I fancied, at one moment, I saw significant looks passing between him and Mrs. Percy. What can be the meaning of all this? Does he pretend to resent the newspaper reports of our marriage? or, perhaps, (who knows?) fancies that *his* character was injured by being seen with me *tête-à-tête* in my carriage!

I was half afraid that Clarence, who is *preux comme Bayard*, was going to take more notice than was desirable of the affair. He knows the familiar terms existing between myself and Penrhyn only last week; and, I suspect, observed me offer my hand. Glancing at my little cousin just afterwards, I saw his cheeks flushed, and his eyes sparkling.

"Has there been any coolness between you and Penrhyn?" he inquired,

"*Comme vous voyez*," I replied, as equivocatingly as I could.

"I see only that he is a d——d coxcomb," said Clarence, with more warmth than became the time and place; "I hope, dear Mrs. Delaval, you will take no further notice of the fellow."

"To cut a person is, in my opinion, to take the greatest possible notice of him," I replied. "I shall henceforward treat Lord Penrhyn as I feel towards him,—with complete indifference."

I suspect Clarence related what had occurred to Lady Cecilia; for she came to me immediately afterwards, and, without saying a word, carried me off to Lady Clackman-

man's clique, and devoted her whole evening to me. This gave me an opportunity of noticing how much her feelings prevail over what she *calls* her "principles," in the affair between Clarence and Alicia. She adores her son, and doats upon her niece; and, though fully aware that the match would be most imprudent, and intending to discourage it, unconsciously lends the young people all the assistance in her power. She cannot bear to see her boy looking uneasy, and whispers, "She is gone into the tea-room." By, and by, fearing that Lady Alicia may forget her engagements to dance with her cousin, she exclaims, "Remember this is the fourth *contre-danse*—remember you are engaged to Clarence." I do not wonder Lady Clackmannan is angry with her, but she cannot help it. The warmest feelings are still glowing under the leprous crust of worldliness she has contracted in the contaminating lazarus-house of fashion.

A charming day at Hazlebank! I soon discovered why the duke was so difficult in his invitations, and so early in his hour. The party was made to meet his mother; a very superior woman, who lives in retirement at a fine old family mansion, near Harefield, and is treated by her family with marked respect. The duchess has a most distinguished look. She reminds me of Sir Thomas Lawrence's full-length portrait of Mrs. Siddons. I thought her a little stately, till I was presented to her by her son, when I found her high-breeding tempered by the mildest courtesy. With such a mother, I no longer wonder that the Duke of Merioneth has shown himself difficult in the choice of a wife.

Not having been at Hazlebank before, I was much interested by the collection of modern pictures and sculptures; still more so, by its conservatories, containing the first collection of exotics in the kingdom. The duke, aware that my *engouement* on this point equals his own, was good-natured enough to be my cicerone, and explain all that was worth notice. Our party collected in the orangery, where he was pointing out a new system of engraving practised in Italy, when he suddenly appealed to Lord Hartston, who was standing near us, for confirmation of some startling facts, compelling him to be a third person in our conversation; which lasted so long, by the way, that the saturnine philosopher and myself can no longer avoid being on speaking terms. We had an elegant *dejeuner* without effort or pretensions; and afterwards, as the evening was warm, came out under the cedar-trees to take ices and coffee. It was all very pleasant,—the party well assorted,—the *locale* enchanting. I was quite sorry when dusk came on, and the carriages were ordered to return to town. How dusty, noisy, and vulgar the streets of London appeared, after fresh, dewy, delightful Hazlebank! I met Mrs. Percy, afterwards, at Mrs. Harrington's ball; who, when she heard that we had had neither music, dancing, tumbling, nor syllabubs, at the duke's, exclaimed—"Je vous

faire mon compliment of your breakfast. I am really grateful to the duke for not involving me in so humdrum an affair."

—I am ashamed to admit how much I feel annoyed by this business with Lord Penrhyn. I never wished him to propose to me, or to have the renown of having refused him; but quite as little did I wish him to assume the tone of having refused *me*. His deportment at Almack's will, at all events, lead people to suppose that he resents the rumour of our marriage as arising from myself. Altogether, I am out of spirits. On Monday my sister leaves town for Bedfordshire, and, though I have been unable to persist in my intention of declining my projected visit, I cannot bear the thoughts of parting with her, now I have ascertained from personal observation how uneasy is the life she leads with Herbert. In spite of his talents and good qualities, her attachment *must* eventually give way under the influence of his detestable temper.

Saturday. How strange!—I had agreed to dine quietly at the Herberts to-day, and, giving up the opera, to pass the evening with Armine. Their hour is seven, and I was punctual; but my brother-in-law was still out. Half-past seven, —eight,—half-past eight,—no Herbert! Armine grew horribly uneasy, for Henry is punctual to a fault, and to a still greater fault exactive of punctuality in others. The butler came in twenty times to know if dinner was to be served: the children cried at being sent to bed without kissing papa; and at length Armine thought it would be civil to me to propose sitting down to dinner. As I oftener dine at nine this hot weather than any other hour, of course I took pity on my poor sister's fidgetiness, and refused. At last, as the clock of Park Street Chapel struck half-past nine, a knock at the door, and in came Mr. Herbert; looking as cross as if he had lost half his fortune by a fall of the stocks.

"We fancied you had changed your mind, and were gone to dine at the club; but Harriet would not hear of sitting down without you," said my sister, in a deprecating tone.

"She is very obliging. You had much better have dined. The dinner must be spoiled. I could have had a mutton-chop at a minute's notice."

"Oh, no! much better sit down all comfortably together. Dinner will be on the table in a moment. Have you washed your hands?"

"Did you not hear me come straight into this room as I entered the house?"

"Is any thing the matter?" interposed I, stoutly, "has any thing occurred to annoy you?"

"Nothing! I was detained by business."

"Not disagreeable, I hope?"

"When was business ever agreeable?" he replied, stalking out the room.

Dinner was now announced; and, by the time the soup was cold, Herbert made his re-appearance from his dressing-room; refreshed by cold water, but still cross. Only monosyllables

were to be abstracted from him; and, by the time he had helped us, in the second course, to a green goose—done, not brown, but black—he relapsed into total silence. Armine and I, who had been talking together for three hours, had exhausted our gossip. We formed a charming family party. At last, when dessert was on the table, the servants withdrawn, and himself thrown back into his cogitation chair, he suddenly burst forth into, “A d—d ugly, gormandizing egotist! to risk *his* life against such a thing as that!” and swallowed a glass of claret as if to quench the burning particles of his indignation; while Armine coloured crimson at the indecorum of his ejaculation.

“You are not aware that you are taking us into your confidence,” said I, trying to turn the matter into jest. “An ugly gormandizing egotist—must designate Mr. Hanton. *Whose* life you consider too precious to be risked against *his*, we are yet to learn.”

“You have a wide scope for guessing. Scarcely a man about town but is worth the weight of ten such superficial asses as George Hanton.”

“You seem to be in the mood for calling names.”

“I am suffering under great irritation. Hartston has been on the point of fighting George Hanton, and without doing me the honour of calling on me for advice; I, who have been his most intimate friend these ten years past.”

“A married man is not lightly to be involved in such affairs,” said I: “he showed his good taste. And how has the business ended?”

“Colonel Trevor acted as his second; and it was the opinion of the club this morning, from something that fell from Trevor’s brother, that a meeting *must* take place. No one knows the motive of the quarrel; they say some impudent observation fell from Hanton, as they were riding together in the park, which Hartston required him to retract. Whatever it was, after much correspondence between the seconds, Hanton has fully retracted; but you may suppose that I could not return home till my doubts were set at rest. I am out of all patience with Hartston. What business had he to bring himself into contact with such a thing as Hanton?”

“I am sure I am thankful to him for not involving you in the affair,” faltered Armine, with tears in her eyes. “I had not thought it possible that my regard for him could have been heightened.”

“How can two men, of pursuits and character so different, have possibly managed to quarrel?” said I, unwilling to admit all the interest I felt in the subject.

“Pursuit! what pursuits *has* George Hanton but those of stuffing and gambling? To see such an animal affect the epicure!—scarcely finding an ortolan or a partridge delicate enough for the nutriment of a body which a hungry wolf would not deign to feed upon!”

In short, Herbert could scarcely find words to express his

indignation ; and, partly to get rid of his violence, partly in hopes to gratify my curiosity touching the cause of a duel which cannot fail to be much talked of, I altered my determination about the opera, sent for the carriage, and departed. But, on arriving at my box, I found myself *de trop*. I forgot having announced to Cecilia my determination not to go; and she had taken with her Madame di Campo Fiorito, who does not "take with her," but is invariably "followed by" a sort of triple shadow, a Cerberus of certain three dandies, who, with the two ladies, completely filled our cozy little box. Of course, I would not hear of disturbing them ;—assured Lady Cecilia I had twenty seats at my disposal, and withdrew in all possible haste,—secretly determined to go home. As I stood waiting for my carriage, however, the Duke of Merioneth came in from some royal dinner-party, and stopped to say *bon soir, en passant*. On learning my dilemma, he would not admit of my losing the last act of the new ballet, but insisted on my accompanying him to his box, which is nearly the best in the house ; when I enjoyed, more than I had ever done before, the dancing of the Taglioni. I could not resist my inclination to question him about the duel, of which he had not heard a syllable ; and seemed to feel the matter as warmly as Herbert. He promised me to go to the Travellers' after the opera, and call on me to-morrow. I am afraid he will not get here before three o'clock. What could Lord Hartston and George Hanton find to fight about ?

—I, who am never visible to visitors on Sunday mornings, desired to-day that every one might be admitted, in order to avoid the *gaucherie* of giving an exclusive order for the duke. The consequence is, that, from two o'clock till six, my rooms have been filled with all the bores in town, while his Grace has not made his appearance ! Perhaps the appointment was mere *façon de parler*, and he never meant to come.

Had I not been pre-engrossed by the subject of the duel, I should have been at once shocked and amused by a scene which occurred here an hour ago. Lord Hilton and Lady Buntingford were sitting with me, arranging the *a quand* of a little ball he wants to give on board his yacht at Woolwich, of which he has asked me to do the honours ; when in walked Count Schazoklwonski, whom, though always wild and reckless, I never yet saw in such a state of perturbation.

"A thousand excuses, dear Madame Delafals," said he, "but (*sans vous interrompre*) what was it the family lives next house to you ; and what name was it, the confounded rascals which was paying him a visit just now ?"

"A showy-looking foreigner in a showy-looking cabriolet ?" said I, readily comprehending that he alluded to the daily suitor of Miss Augusta Gresham Ronham.

"A beast-looking foreigner, in a beast-looking cab," cried the count, with indignation. "I beseech you, what calls he himself ?"

"I am sorry I cannot inform you," said I; "I am equally unacquainted with my neighbours and their guests."

"If you mean a tall handsome Transylvanian, who goes about with the Gresham Ronshams," observed Lady Buntingford, "his name is something like Schwartzky which. They asked leave to bring him to my ball, but my list was full, and I declined."

"Do you not mean Count Schwarzkiewicz?" inquired Lord Hilton. "He is a friend of Lancaster's, and Sir Jervis Hall's; and they are trying to get him in at the Travellers'. A deuced knowing fellow about horses. They tell me he has a breeding stud in the Ukraine, which furnishes half the Austrian cavalry."

"A pitiful rascals,—a disgusting impostors!" cried Szchazoklwonski, in a still greater fury. "Unless my eyes strangeways deceive me, 'tis a runaway hayduck of my father's, which was severely flogged for stealing; and which would have been sent to the ranks to mend his moral, had he not took French furlough, and made off from Hungarn."

"You must be mistaken, my dear fellow!—you must be mistaken!" exclaimed Lord Hilton. "Schwarzkiewicz brought excellent letters here from Paris,—he is very well in society. I don't know him personally, but I have heard him highly spoken of by all our fellows."

"No such tings!" exclaimed Szchazoklwonoki, out of all patience; "'tis a *kerl*, a vagabonds,—vat you calls a black-guards!"

"Be cautious, be cautious!" cried Hilton; "make sure of your man before you persist in the charge. *Where* did you see him? *when*?"

"I caught a glance as he step from his cab into the house who is next from this."

"Mr. Gresham Ronsham's, of Wrangham Hall—a highly respectable family," interposed Lady Buntingford.

"May be or not," cried the count. "Mr. Creeshing Ronshing has a swindlers in his apartments at tis fery minutes!"

"Could not your friend make sure of the fact," observed the more prudent Lady Buntingford, "by remaining here till the count's departure, and watching him into the carriage?"

"Certainly, if you think it worth while," said I, addressing the count.

"It is more than worth while; it is a duty to relieve society of an impostor," observed Lord Hilton. "Since the question has been raised, and since I know Schwarzkiewicz to be on the eve of admission into the Travellers', I, for my own satisfaction, entreat you not to leave the business in doubt."

"My book-room commands a view of Mr. Gresham Ronsham's door," said I; "if you like to take up your station there, you cannot fail to see the exit of the count."

"No, no; I would incost him face to face, for more demon-

strations!" cried the angry count. "I shall walk up and down the Place till he shall pass."

"Give me leave to accompany you," said Lord Hilton. "I shall not be sorry to witness the scene, and you may require testimony of what passes. *Allons!*"

"You will not have long to wait," I observed, as they took leave. "My neighbours are always early at the Zoological on Sundays,—always first and last at every public place. It is already four. They will soon be on the wing."

"Pray, let me remain with you till the scene is over," said Lady Buntingford: "I am dying to know how it ends. I have always told that foolish woman, my friend Mrs. Ronsham, that, for the mother of a family, she is much too general in her acquaintance. I have no doubt this count will turn out a swindler; and then the prospects of that unfortunate girl, Augusta, are ruined for life. Do let us come into your book-room."

The moment we entered the door, loud angry voices, under the window, convinced us the scene was already in progress; and, looking out, we perceived Count Szchazoklwonoki collarizing the infuriated Schwarzkiewicz; while Lord Hilton kept back the interference of the footmen of Mr. Gresham Ronsham, whose whole establishment, "foolish fat scullion and all," was assembled on the door-steps. At last, I was vexed to see my friend, Szchazoklwonoki, inflict several blows with his cane on the shoulders of his antagonist; readily anticipating what followed, that the interference of the police would be called in by some officious bystander.

"They be only foreigneers," said a man in a light porter's jacket. "Dang un, let'un foight it out."

The police thought otherwise. Both were taken into custody; when Szchazoklwonoki, addressing the German groom in waiting with his tilbury, bade him drive off to the Austrian Embassy, and bring his two friends, Count Dietrichstein and Prince Lichtenstein, to meet him at the office. The moment this order was given, to the surprise of all present, the *sois-disant* Count Schwarzkiewicz, who had hitherto been as magnanimous as *le brave Dunois*, fell whimpering on his knees upon the pavement, imploring the count to let him off: but Szchazoklwonoki was inflexible; gave him anew in charge as a swindler, and proceeded to meet him in Marlborough Street. St. James's Place is, luckily, so quiet a situation, that but a moderate mob was collected to witness this strange affair; or to hear the shriek (piercing as that of Parisina) with which, from her bower-window, Miss Augusta Gresham Ronsham witnessed the recreancy of the delinquent.

So soon as the street was cleared, Lady Buntingford proceeded, at my suggestion, to enlighten the mind of "that foolish woman, her friend, Mrs. Ronsham," touching the mysteries of the day. I suspect she succeeded in persuading the family that it would be better to put an unconscious face upon the business; for, in the course of an hour, the family

coach came round, and away they rumbled a *l'ordinaire* into the Park; the carriage displaying only four pink satin bouquets, instead of five. Miss Augusta remained at home, weeping out her tender sorrows.

About six o'clock, I received a few apologizing lines from the duke, stating that he had been unavoidably detained by the arrival of his mother, to pass the day with him; and informing me that nothing was known of the quarrel between his friend and Mr. Hanton, further than that the affair was at an end.

—At seven, the Herberts dined with me; my brother in high spirits at the prospect of quitting town, and Armine quietly happy, because she saw her husband so. Immediately after dinner, I proposed a drive in the open carriage on the Harrow road,—the prettiest, but least frequented of the suburbs; and, while enjoying the cool of the evening, and gossipping of this and that, Lord Hartston and his duel again came upon the *tapis*. In the openness of my heart, I indiscreetly observed, that I believed Hanton capable of any degree of insolence—that his conduct towards myself—I paused, but it was too late. Herbert would not let me rest till I had explained every particular of the proposal and the letter.

“By heavens I clearly understand it now!” cried he. “The infernal ass, no doubt, hazarded to Hartston some impudent comment upon your conduct; and Hartston, impelled by the foolish preference he is still absurd enough to indulge, and, knowing you had neither husband, father, nor brother, to defend you, thought fit to resent it! As if the duty did not belong to *me*! As if it were not *my* place to vindicate the reputation of my sister-in-law! I must have a serious explanation with him; I *must* know the truth.”

“But you have not the slightest grounds for your supposition,” said I, really alarmed.

“There are a thousand, a million of topics, on which they may have disagreed.”

“No, no, no! From one or two hints I gathered from Colonel Trevor, who was eager to put an end to my investigation, I am convinced that *you*, and *you* only, were the cause of the dispute.”

“At all events,” interposed Armine, “the affair is now at rest; and it would be very unfair to my sister to renew the publicity of what *must* be painful, and *may* be injurious to her.”

“Injurious to her!” cried Herbert, losing all command of himself; “I declare to you, Harriet, that for a woman endowed with common sense, I look upon you as worse than inexcusable. Through life your prospects have been ruined by your own wilfulness,—your own folly! It is now more than ten years since I first became acquainted with you; and, from that time, I have scarcely ever seen you conduct yourself like a reasonable being.”

“Thank you,” said I, trying, at least to retain the command of my own temper.

“No; don’t think to silence me by a woman’s flippant retort! I *will* tell you the truth, and you *shall* hear it. Think of all the evil you have heaped on your own head! Because that fellow, Delaval, swore you were an angel at your first race-ball, and looked well at the head of his regiment on a field-day, you accepted his proposals. You were assured by your friends, that he was a violent man—a man of inferior education; yet you ventured to give him your hand, and fix yourself for life in one of the most wretched districts in Ireland. Reflect on what he became there! Reflect on what you suffered under the tyranny of a brute—a *sot*!”

“Stay!” cried I. “With myself you are at liberty to deal as harshly as you please. Colonel Delaval is no more. *His* name is sacred.”

“So far you may be right,” replied Herbert, in a milder tone. “Of *him* I have no right to speak; but of yourself, Harriet, I must and will. You returned among us, having suffered much, and little profited by your sufferings; but, young, honoured, wealthy, rich in all that *ought* to have secured your happiness. What have you done to improve these blessings? Branded yourself with fashionable notoriety, and rendered your name as familiar in the mouths of the puppies of the clubs, as those of the vile and worthless. One of the first men in this kingdom was disposed to make you his wife, and elevate you to a position which even the most ambitious of your vain associates have gloried in attaining. Your levity revolted him. It was a woman of heart, of mind, not a flimsy worldling, he wished to find in the companion of his future life; and all he has derived from a momentary illusion, is the stigma of a duel with one of the meanest and most contemptible of Crockford’s profligates. But this is not all. You have exposed yourself to a thousand slights. Penrhyn’s insolence (thanks to your friends, the Lancasters and Percies) has raised a general laugh at your expense; yet, apparently unsatisfied with the extent of your incautious, only last night you chose to thrust yourself upon the notice of the public, *tete-a-tete* with the Duke of Merioneth, in order that the Sunday prints might hold you up to ridicule as they have done this day, as “the dashing Irish widow, who is venturing a bold cast of the net for —;” but why should I repeat such trash! or, rather, why should such inuendoes have been levelled at the daughter of General Montressor!”

I was too much agitated for any attempt to interrupt or appease him. While he was speaking, dearest Armine, unable to repress her tears, took my hand in hers, and pressed it tenderly, as if bespeaking my forbearance towards her husband. But her appeal was needless. I could not be angry with Herbert. Every word he uttered was dictated by the

best intentions,—by the warmest interest in my welfare. I trust he exaggerates my errors. I trust he is deceived. I—

* * * * *

Monday, 1st.—I woke this morning with a dreadful headache; partly caused by reflections on Herbert's remonstrances; partly by the knowledge that Armine and the children were already some twenty miles on their road into Bedfordshire. However, I have promised to visit them at Hollybridge early in the autumn.

Monday, 8th.—A whole week elapsed, and not a word in my diary. Since Herbert's rough apostrophe, or, perhaps I should say, since Herbert's harsh administration of wholesome truths, I have dreaded to record my own observations, seeing how completely I have suffered myself to become a dupe to the flatterers of the world. I misdoubt myself,—I misdoubt others. I would have quitted town the very day of Armine's departure, but that such a precipitate retreat would have been instantly traced by the malicious to its true motive, mortification. I am grown listless,—morose. People ask if I am ill; and suggest this remedy and that; as they do to languid fine ladies, sickening under the fatigues of the season, and the vexation of its termination.

Most families, unshackled by the claims of parliament, or the responsibilities of supreme fashion, have already quitted town. London is more close, more dusty, more disagreeable than I could have supposed possible. The once green park under my windows is now of a tawny yellow; and water-carts and Grange's currant-ice alone preserve the men and beasts, who still frequent it, from being carbonized in the course of their morning's amusements. Is it not one of the strangest abuses of this fox-hunting kingdom, that winter is to be spent in the country, and summer in town? What a meritorious achievement would it be for the reign of Victoria I. to cause the extermination of foxes, like that of the wolves of yore, by exacting an annual tribute of so many thousand heads! thus enabling the legislative lords of the creation to assemble between November and May; and its ladies to enjoy their parks and flower-gardens, when the rose is on the bush, and the daisy in the grass.

As it is, we denizens of the scorching metropolis seem to pass the dog-days in rushing forth to this suburb and to that, gasping after fresh air. To-day, a *dejeuner* at Highgate; to-morrow, a gipsy party to Finchley; with fish dinners in taverns, savouring of punch, tobacco, Thames mud, and fried founders; or venison dinners at the Star and Garter, for the supplementary enjoyment of a dusty drive. Old Lady Burlington and Mrs. Crowhurst, the Lancasters and Percies, exclaim, every time I meet them, "Is not London charming, now all the people are gone? It is like ecarte after long whist?" For my part, I find it resemble only the last tedious dragging repetition of a waltz played by a musical snuff-box,

of which the main spring is run down. The thing was winding up.

The other day we were a little enlivened by the novelty of Lord Hilton's ball. Those especially invited, myself among the number, left Westminster Bridge about four o'clock in the Admiralty barge; with a brass-band attending, to outstrip the strange tumults of the river; and with little Count Alfred de la Vauguyon (a walking Delcroix's shop) to out-essence its *mauvaises odeurs*. The river looked of a dingy copper colour; and the steeples of the city, and engine chimneys of the borough—nay, even the masts of the shipping in the docks, seemed to lose themselves in the haze of an atmosphere worthy the coast of Guinea, or the canvass of some Martinian pandemonium. We arrived at the inn at Woolwich, where five-and-twenty were invited to dine, in a state worthy to have been garnished with fried parsley and served among the *fritures*. White-bait ought not to tempt any thing less than an alderman into such superfluous exertions in such weather.

The ball was prettily managed, and the yacht beautifully illuminated; but it strikes me we should have danced quite as much to our own satisfaction in Lord Hilton's mansion in Berkley Square. I accompanied Lady Cecilia back. I am careful now to avoid being in my own carriage with a vacant seat to be encroached upon by some impertinent lounge. The most amusing person of the party was Madame di Campo Fiorito. Deeply penetrated with the notion of the nautical glories of England, and the "rule" which that tin-helmeted Amazon Britannia assumes to herself over the waves, she seemed to fancy that our marine supremacy must commence at London Bridge; she saw a seventy-four in every West-Indiaman,—a frigate in every Doggerbank cod-schuyt,—and a tar under the jacket of every jolly young waterman. Her ejaculations at the sight of Greenwich Hospital, and its wooden-legged Tom Toughs, were quite *Della-Cruscan*; and greatly did she applaud the magnanimity of our English sovereigns in having, as she concluded, resigned their own palaces as a shelter for the veterans of their fleets, and contented themselves with the tumble-down alms-house of St. James's. The yacht, too, enchanted her; and she enchanted us in her turn by the description of a *fête* she had witnessed in childhood, given to Josephine in the Bay of Genoa, by the Ligurian republic; when hundreds of orange-trees in blossom were embarked in boats, and towed around the barge containing the wife of the hero of Marengo; an idea far more elegant, in my opinion, than the tinsel glories of Cleopatra's galley with its purple brocades and painted Cupids.

Lady Southam, who leaves town to-morrow, is anxious that I should accompany her to Southam Castle; and there are few women for the sake of whose society I would more willingly make a sacrifice. But I have promised Lady Cecilia to remain here till something definitive is settle

about poor Clarence. How is it I have managed to see so little of Isabella Southam during her stay in town? With the exception of a dinner here, and one at her own house, we have scarcely met. Such is the *entrainment* of fashion in London society, that persons entertaining a sincere friendship for each other, and living only at a few streets' distance, if engaged in different sets, content the claims of their mutual regard by now and then a formal dinner party, at which they are unable to exchange six words of conversation. Isabella belongs to a sober caste, and seems bigoted to the rationalities of the present court;—is constant to the Ancient Music,—curious about exhibitions and picture auctions,—takes her children half-a-dozen times in the season to the British Museum and Longman's catacombs of learning; and eschews a circulating library as she would a masquerade warehouse. Wise in her generation, she will meet her reward; but, foolish as I am in mine, she will not meet me. I wish I had courage to disentangle myself from the webs of filmy gossamer, which I have suffered to fold and enfold me, till they have become potent as chains of mail. But it is too late.

I have not once seen the Duke of Merioneth since the newspapers thought proper to couple his name with mine. He called here the other day; but at the hour when I was certain to be out: for I continue my daily rides with Lady Alicia and her father,—often extending them as far as Roehampton, or Richmond. The King and Queen go to Windsor next week, and I shall consequently lose the Clackmannans. Previously to the Penrhyn affair, I had become very intimate with the Rossanas, whom I particularly like: but, not choosing to put myself in the way of *his* solemn salutations, I have gradually receded from their set. It amuses me, now the gaieties of the season have subsided, to observe divers persons and coteries reascending into importance, who, during the crush of June, were forgotten. Lady Kent's card-parties are once more frequented; and Lady William Bately's, once more *recherches*. The placard of "to let furnished," is posted anew in the dusty windows of the family mansion, erewhile the scene of poor Augusta Gresham Ronsham's sentimentalities; and I noticed, that it required a supplementary baggage-waggon, inscribed with the name of "Tanaquil Gresham Ronsham, Esq. Wrangham Park, Hunts," to convey into the country the additional trunks, boxes, and cases containing the paraphernalia of their disastrous London campaign. The *exequit omnes* of the family wore a most dispiriting aspect. The elder girls, like the coach-horses, looked worn to their last legs; the younger ones had been backboarded, metronomed, and mazurk'd into a most cadaverous complexion; and the meagre baby, with its pinched blue nose, seemed victimized by a course of calomel and a daily apothecary. Lady Buntingford informs me she suggested a couple of months at Leamington for the general restoration of the family; but that papa, after due discharge of his bills of the

season, was beginning to talk of the hardness of the times, and the reduction of his rent-roll; while mamma was of opinion, that the less they appeared in public the better, till Stanislas Ruprecht Schmidt (*alias* Count Schwarzkiewicz) should be duly released from the tread-mill, and on board the Hamburgh steamer.

Yes! I shall soon be at liberty. The Clarence crisis is approaching. I have just received a P.P.C. from the Mardynvilles,—an unfailing signal that the Court, and consequently the Clackmannans, are on the move for Windsor.

En attendant, one of the French princes has arrived; and as so few persons remain in town who are in a position to entertain him, the Duke of Merioneth has determined to give a farewell ball to-morrow, in honour of his royal highness; the last fete of the season, but probably one of the most brilliant!

The *last*! Weary as I am of this eternal circle of frivolity,—this day without a night,—this year without a winter,—the idea that I am about to say farewell to so many intimate associates,—to part, for a period of eight months, and perhaps for ever, from so many who have been kind to me, fills my mind with melancholy forebodings. Independence, too, is a fine thing; but the bird that soars highest, and sings loudest in honour of the joys of liberty, still keeps in view the little nest to which, when weary of the wing, it can return for shelter; while I, who have “the world before me, where to choose my place of rest,” tremble at the wideness of my prospects, and the knowledge of my own irresponsibility. I may travel where I will,—abroad,—at home; seek what company I list, good, bad, or indifferent; and no one has a right to call in question my comings, or my goings. No one cares whether I injure my reputation,—whether I squander my fortune. Armine is wrapt up in her husband and children; Herbert in himself. Even the reprimand he lately addressed me arose from the danger in which he supposed me to have involved his friend, more than from interest in my own welfare. Were I to set forth, on a tour to the Continent, and indulge my own vagrant devices, until next spring, I verily believe that not a creature would inquire, “What has become of Mrs. Delaval?” unless, perhaps, Lady Cecilia, during the intervals of her heartquakes about her son!—Dispiriting reflexion!—*Rude école!*

—I know not whether my misanthropic doom of yesterday had written strange defeatures in my face; but, when I entered the ball-room at Merioneth House last night, several persons accosted me with the inquiry, “Prythee, why so pale?” which is sure to answer itself, by bringing blushes to the cheek. *Certes*, it was no time or place for *tristesse*. Beautiful as the fetes there always are, *this* was surpassing. The *encoignures* of the room were filled with pyramidal *jardinières* reaching to the ceiling, and containing nothing but roses. Every nursery-ground near London must have been despoiled; for there were many hundred varieties; some of the choicest

kind. It was literally "the feast of roses;" and Moore, who was present, must have felt himself in an eighth heaven of his own creation!

In honour of the young prince (of whose grand-uncle, the Emperor Leopold, she was formerly the intimate friend,) the Duchess of Merioneth for one presided over a fete given by her son; and queenly, indeed, she looked. It struck me, that her deportment, as a noble matron, and that of the Duc de N., as a *prince du sang*, were alike the perfection of high breeding. They talked for some time together; and, formal as such *entretiens* needs must be, there was none of the restraint between them which would have led some vulgar dowager to observe, "What could I find to say to a boy?" or some gawky lordling to complain, "What the d—l could I talk of to an old woman?"

I was rather curious, and perhaps a little anxious, to ascertain whether the reports in circulation would produce any change in his Grace's manners towards myself. But my inquietudes were quite superfluous. I might have known, that there was nothing of the Penrhyn,—nothing of the Hanton, in his kind and noble nature. He received me more warmly than he had ever done before. The duchess found a place for me to sit near her; and at supper, I was the only untitled person to whom a place was assigned at the table prepared for the Duc de Nemours. Lord Lancaster mentioned accidentally, when I met him the previous day at the British Gallery, that George Hanton was furious at not being invited; and I am convinced, from an observation made to me by the duke, that the omission was intentional, and a compliment to me. I certainly do feel happier in houses where I am secure from the spectacle of his self-complacent ugliness.

In the midst of the ball, Mrs. Percy, perceiving me to be in fashion, took my arm, and coaxed me away into one of the half-empty drawing-rooms, much to my discomposure; for there sat Lady Clackmannan in violent disputation with Clarence, and I would not for the world have appeared to take note of what was going on between them.

"I congratulate you, my dear creature," whispered Mrs. Percy, after having planted me on one of the ottomans, and herself by my side; "he is gone,—actually gone!"

I turned towards her with wondering eyes; "To whom do you allude?" being plainly inscribed in the expression of my face.

"Penrhyn,—Lord Penrhyn," she replied, carefully examining what effect the mention of that cabalistic name might produce in my countenance. "Refused in form by the Rossanas, and so much to his astonishment, that he quitted town within four-and-twenty hours, after writing to put off all the

people he had invited for August to Penrhyn Hall for grouse-shooting. The *Courier* of this evening states, that he has ordered his yacht to prepare for a cruise in the Mediterranean."

"I trust Lord Perhyn will amuse himself," said I. "He has long ceased to amuse me."

"Oh! as to you," cried Mrs. Percy, "his conduct was absolutely unpardonable. I told every one, at the time, that I considered it infamous. However, there were people about him—George Hanton and the Lancasters—who thought it clever to put him up to a tone likely to pique you."

"They must have been grievously disappointed to find me so indifferent on the subject."

"Of course we were all aware you must be annoyed; but we did honour to your self-command in seeming to take it so coolly."

"More honour than I deserved. I may have been unconscious of insults deliberately prepared by others, and, therefore, to *them* most evident."

"Why, really, my dear soul," she was continuing, but at that moment the duke, evidently in search of me, approached, to mention his mother's request that I would join her supper-table with the royal party; and, accepting his offered arm, I was not sorry to leave Mrs. Percy to her malicious manœuvre. After supper, the duke, for the first and only time during the evening, joined the dancers, inviting me to be his partner in a waltz; on the conclusion of which, leading me to one of the *jardinieres*, he plucked an exquisite white and yellow union rose, the object of general admiration throughout the evening, and presented it to me. I saw many envious eyes fixed upon me, and, after the mortifications I have recently experienced, could not help feeling a flush of feminine triumph at being thus singled out by a person singled out by the whole of London. Lord Hartston had just entered the room as I received my beautiful bouquet, and I determined to retire with my laurels and my rose unwithered. Having already asked for my carriage, I withdrew as precipitately as Cinderella.

—This morning, I was sent for at an early hour, to Lady Ceeilia, whom I found half in hysterics, wholly in despair. Lady Clackmannan's explanations last night with Clarence seem to have been decisive. She has forbidden all further intercourse between the cousins; and, instead of following the court to Windsor, leaves the marquess to his official duties, and actually sets off with Alicia this very day for Scotland. Clarence fancies himself ill-used; although Lady C. has acted only as any other parent would have done in her

situation ; yet I had some difficulty in preventing Cecilia from writing to her sister one of those angry letters which create an irreparable breach. Women in a passion should begin by throwing into the fire their pens and paper : as much mischief has been done in the world by hasty letters, as by the discovery of gunpowder.

Made my *adieu* to-night to the opera ;—a melancholy spectacle. The house almost empty,—half the boxes not wholly deserted, being filled with problematics. It really oppressed me to note the loss of so many of the charming faces on which I have been gazing for the last four months, till they seemed inseparable from the place ; nor had I patience to look down on the empty benches of the pit, and deserted fops-alley, where only three weeks ago every face was *de connaissance*. With the exception of some thirty men who, I fancy, never quit London, the desecrated space was filled by haberdasher's apprentices, and butlers out of place ! I have just answered a pressing letter of invitation which I received yesterday from Armine, promising to be at Hollybridge next week. *Apres* —I trust the stars have me in their keeping ; for projects I have none,—*alors, comme alors* !

—To increase my depression at the moment of parting with so many friends, I have accidentally been witness to a most painful, or, perhaps, I ought to say, a most impressive scene. On visiting my *couturiere*, to execute a commission for one of my Irish friends, I found the good woman's aspect so doleful that I could not help making inquiries. Her venerable inmate, she said was upon his death-bed !

“ Mr. Forster rallied for a time, poor gentleman, under the excitement produced by your generous offices,” continued Mrs. Hemstitch ; “ and we were in hopes of getting him into the country : but the very heart within him seems to have been worn away by years of trouble ; the vital powers were gone, and, for the last three days, he has been rapidly sinking. He knows that his time has come,—is resigned and tranquil ; for your generosity, madam, has secured the welfare of his children. I cannot express the difference in his feelings now and a month ago. Then, it was dreadful to see him shrink from the approach of death ; now, his frame of mind is as it should be. Of one thing he has long been earnestly desirous, poor soul ;—he wants to thank and bless his benefactress. But we have put him off with pretexts of your being absent from town ; for, of course, madam, I felt the impossibility of asking a great lady and gay a lady like yourself to visit a dying man in the attic of one of your trades-people.”

“ If you think my presence would afford him the smallest

satisfaction," said I, "even now, at the eleventh hour, I will gladly accede to his wish." And I own I was in hopes of hearing my offer declined, for I did not feel myself to be in a state of preparation for such a scene.

"If you would so far condescend," said Mrs. Hemstitch, eagerly; and, without further deliberation, I removed from my head the gaudy bonnet and plumes so unsuitable to the nature of my visit, and followed my blunt but good Samaritan up a dark staircase to a door, at which she tapped gently; and, after a little whispering with the nurse, beckoned me in. The deathlike stillness of that little chamber scarcely induced the belief that four persons were its inmates: but the son and daughter were kneeling on either side the bed—their very tears falling silently, lest they should disturb the last moments of the dying man.

As I looked upon the white head scarcely distinguishable from the pillow on which it lay, and remembered that it was blanched less by years than by affliction (the humiliating affliction of poverty, which might have been so readily relieved), my heart grew faint with a sudden consciousness of the responsibilities of the wealthy. The old man's eyes were dim, but his lips moved as though absorbed in inward prayer. Feeling that it was now too late to afford him pleasure by my visit, I was about to withdraw from the room, when the movement attracted his attention, and, turning his languid eyes towards me, he seemed in a moment to understand the motive of my presence. His countenance brightened. Feebly raising his thin hand from the coverlid, he extended it towards me; and, having pressed mine with a grasp of fervour, and an earnest expression of face which I shall not easily forget, placed it in benediction on the head of his girl, whose sobs were stifled in the bedclothes, and extended the other intercedingly to heaven. In another minute the upraised hand fell back relaxed upon the sheet, and the eyes of the grateful father were already fixed in death. His labours were over—his privations ended—his days of darkness brightened into eternal light.

There is comfort to me in the thought, that, useless as is my career of life, in this instance I have had the happiness of contributing to the comfort of a suffering fellow-creature. But was the good deed of *my* seeking? Was it not almost forced upon me by the superior virtue of one, so placed in the scale of society that she ought to have received her example of charity from *me*? Alas! my own merit in the affair is insignificant indeed.

—Lady Cecilia is just now in one of her unreasonable fits of nervousness; and poor Sir Jenison has a happy prospect

in the month of conjugal felicity they are about to pass at Cowes. She had settled it with herself that I should accompany her, and that we were to have yachting parties, regattas, and I know not what; and cannot pardon me for preferring Bedfordshire. But I feel the want of quiet, and of my sister's society; and, even when I not resolved upon visiting the Herberts, Cowes, is the last place I should have preferred, as I find Lord Penrhyn is amusing himself in the Isle of Wight, having already plucked off his Rossana willow.

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Hollybridge, Beds.—What a pleasant sensation, after the tumults and heartburnings of a season in town, to be awakened by the song of birds, from a tranquillizing night's rest! How beautifully green appears the verdure of the paddock under my windows, and the coppice towards which it slopes after the dingy Green Park, and the dusty groves of Buckingham Palace! How fresh, how fragrant the air here, after the stifling atmosphere of London! I fancied that the recent dispiritment of my mind arose from regret at the idea of leaving town; but, no sooner were the change of habit broken, and I found myself ensconced in my travelling carriage, than I felt relieved from the pressure of a thousand imaginary evils. I am delighted to find myself here.

Armine and the children have recovered their good looks and good spirits, and received me at the gate, all bloom and cheerfulness; even Herbert seems to be quite a different creature here in his little domain.

The place is a thousand times prettier than I expected; and, though "a cottager of gentility," its pride does not even pretend to be humble. There is a pretty green-house attached to the drawing-room; and the gardens are good and extensive for the size of the domain. The windows command an animated landscape; the book-room is well furnished; altogether, there is an air of cheerfulness which fully explains my brother's distaste for the smoky house in New Norfolk Street. Hollybridge is a home that seems to invite one to be happy.

It appears an established rule in country neighbourhoods, that the moment a friend or relative arrives on a visit, all the surrounding families shall confederate to interrupt their enjoyment of each other's society. For three days only was I

permitted to be alone with my sister and her rosy childreg. On the fourth came Lady Farrington, of Farringtons Park, full of reproaches to Armine, that she had not more immediately apprised her of dear Mrs. Delaval's arrival; and insisting that an early day should be fixed for a visit to Sir John and herself. Supposing that the word "visit" purported only a formal full-dress dinner party, to be purchased by a drive of five or six miles, I still attempted to telegraph to my sister an entreaty that the project might be negatived. But Lady Farrington was there only to enforce her demand; and we found it impossible to deny that no pre-engagement prevented our accepting her invitation for Thursday, the second of August. The knotty point thus adjusted, she withdrew; but what was my consternation on learning from Armine that the neighbourhood of Hollybridge is what is called "a charming sociable neighbourhood;" i. e. one of those in which it is decreed, that those who dine must sleep, and that those who dine and sleep, extend the penance to eight and forty hours. We have, therefore, impending over us, a visit of two days to fussy, empty, parading Lady Farrington. But this is not my only grievance. She appears to have made a round of visitations for the sole purpose of circulating through the country the arrival of Mrs. Herbert's sister; the following day, our pretty little drawing-room was crowded with all the visitables within eight miles distance of Hollybridge.

I now admit that I was inhuman in my verdict, that quiet country families, such as the Gresham Ronshams and Farringtons, were better at their country seats than amid the fashionable corruptions of London. I did not know, or had forgotten, the stupifying triviality of a sociable, gossiping country neighbourhood. Amongst the five detachments of fiddle-faddlers who yesterday bestowed their tediousness upon Hollybridge, exactly three topics of conversation were started; the committal of one Phil. Robinson by a certain worshipful 'Squire Smith, on a charge of having poisoned a fox-cover;—the probability that Sir Thomas Elliot, the high-sheriff, would start a new carriage for the approaching assizes;—and the injustice of a bill passed last session, for turning the road between Gorse Hill and Broomby Bottom, so as to secure Lord Forcefig's wall-fruit from the dust. On these three nothingnesses did they ring the changes; arguing, re-arguing, swallowing their own arguments; misapprehending, and apologizing for their own stupidity; misrepresenting, and sneaking out of their own equivocations, till I scarcely wondered that poor Miss Augusta Gresham Ronsham should have been captivated by the fine, gay, bold-faced villainy of a

Count Schwarzkiewicz, with his man-of-the-world-like diversity of small talk. No pismire, domesticated in its ant-hill, can entertain a narrower view of life and manners than two-thirds of Armine's country neighbours; valuable people, no doubt, in their generation ("bien heureux les pauvres d'esprit"), but tedious beyond all patience, save that of my gentle amiable sister. I have been trying to persuade Armine to remove our work-table and books to-morrow into a delightful grove of lime-trees, a few hundred yards from the house; but the earnestness with which she pleaded—"Still we must receive our visitors; they are kind friendly people; and, you know, it would be impossible to say, 'not at home,' to those who come several miles, only to show us attention," was unanswerable. It seemed any thing but impossible to me; but Armine knows best.

—Farrington Park! Farrington Park!—what a type of antediluvianism!—nothing wanting but the ponderous coach-and-six, with gilt springs, to represent the family establishment of all the Grandisons. A great gloomy state drawing-room, without a flower, a book, or a comfortable chair to muse in; a great state dining-room, with portraits of all variety of badness, in oils and crayons, of Farringtons of the three last reigns, ending with Sir John, M.P., painted at the expense of the corporation of Bedford, in a William-Pitt-like attitude, with a business-like standish and corporation rolls on his writing-table; a great state billiard-room, with a table of the last century, its green cloth like my own Green Park, faded into autumnal yellow; a great state staircase, and suite of great state bed-rooms, with great state four-post beds, of dusty damask; and a great state Dutch flower-garden, three-quarters of a mile from the hall door! Every thing, in short, to secure the discomfort of its inmates. Herbert groaned aloud, as we drove up to the portico; while Armine felt it her duty to console him by the observation, that, however disagreeable the visit, he would be able to get through a great deal of justice-business with Sir John, in the course of the next two days.

Lady Farrington welcomed us with the hospitable fervour of an Arab.

"I expect a charming party!" said she. "In addition to Sir Thomas Clargess' family, we have Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville, who are coming from Berkshire to pass a week with us; very fashionable people, who live on the most intimate terms with the royal family. Perhaps you may have met them in town?"

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To record the two days of parade and dulness that followed, would be too severe a task. At half past nine, the breakfast bell, and a morning sacrifice of pasties, hams, tongues, potted meats, with steaming urns and chocolate-pots, in a room hung with scarlet moreen, and facing the morning sun. Next, a stifling *seance* round a work-table, covered with worsteds and carpet-work, till the servant's dinner-bell announces a hot luncheon in the scarlet room, now basking in meridian fervour. Then an airing in the family coach, or a walk in the formal Dutch garden, till the half-hour dressing-bell: a grand toilet of silks and satins,—dinner of four courses,—coffee, tea, whist,—and, at half-past ten, a supper. Four regular meals a-day, eaten with the same dull people, in the same dull room, and unseasoned by a single word of rational conversation! In spite of my presentiments, the Mardynvilles *were* an acquisition to the party; their exceeding absurdity proved a relief, after the common-place jog-trot decorum of Sir John and his wife. Lady Mardynville insisted on making me the accomplice of her affectation; and talked of our “friend, the Duke of Merioneth,” and “our balls at St. James's” (to over-awe the country neighbours,) in the style of Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs. But this was not her worst offence. When we made our appearance in the drawing-room, jewelled to the teeth, to weary for the second day's dinner, Lady M., who had departed after luncheon on a tour of visits, with her hostess, in the family coach, sailed up to me with a patronizing air, to assure me that dear old Lady Hartston was quite irate with the Herberts, for not having apprized her of my presence at Hollybridge.

“My sister acted in compliance with my request,” was my cold reply; “I came to Bedfordshire expressly to visit her, and was anxious that the time we pass together should be as little as possible broken in upon by strangers.”

“By strangers,—very possibly; but, by friends, like Lady Hartston?”

“With Lady Hartston I have not even the honour of acquaintance.”

“Really? Why, she spoke of you with so much interest, and seemed to know you so intimately, that I concluded you had been friends for years. How strange!”

“Your mistake does me too much honour. I never spoke to her in my life.”

“Well, you will speak to her soon. She is going to Hollybridge on Saturday, expressly to wait upon you; although Lady Farrington informs me that the old lady rarely pays morning visits.”

So, after all, I am condemned to become acquainted with the surly old gentlewoman of the ventilator; and to-morrow she will be here! How snug and comfortable every thing appears in our little greenery, after the glare and gormandizing of Farrington Park! Of all the taxes whose payment falls to the lot of civilized mortals, what is called our debt to society is certainly one of the heaviest.



Saturday.—Decidedly, that Lady Mardynville is the fairy Guignon in disguise. As if for the express purpose of annoyance, she persuaded Lady Farrington to drive her to Hollybridge to-day; being well aware that Lady Hartston was to be here. The grave old lady came, evidently disposed to be kind and courteous; but no sooner did the other two take their places at the luncheon-table, than the Mardynville's abominable fine-ladyism disgusted her into silence. Throughout her flippancies and pretensions, she appealed to her dear Mrs. Delaval for confirmation; and I had really no patience to find myself elected the bosom-friend of one, whom I have uniformly avoided as even a visiting acquaintance. What must Lady Hartston think of me, with two such associates as Miss Randall and this lion-and-unicorn hunter; she was very kind, however, in pressing me to visit her; and it is arranged, that on Tuesday we dine and sleep at the Abbey.



Hartston.—I am half inclined to believe that the spirit of local sanctity is never wholly exorcized from the site of a religious house! There is a tone of human tranquillity about this place, which inclines one to expect a procession of monks gliding through its woods, or an encounter with some cowled Benedictine, telling his beads among the ruins of the sanctuary. All is so calm, so still, so holy, that the very belling of the deer under the old oaks becomes a disturbance.

Many people are of opinion that the Sir Jeffrey Hartston who, in the reign of Elizabeth, erected the present mansion, chose ill in fixing the site so close upon the ruins of the

ancient abbey: but the monks seem to have understood the climate of England better than the generality of their successors; and, in my opinion, the well-screened position of Hartston Abbey, seated on a gentle eminence sloping to a noble stream, is perfection. The park is skirted round by groves; and the freshness of the home-view delights me more than all the staves over a dozen counties, devised by modern villa-mongers, or puffed by modern auctioneers. A library of old books, a gallery of old pictures, groves of old trees, and a service of old plate, assimilate well with the Elizabethan solidity of the place. I do not wonder that the Mardynville called it dull: her *parvenu* love of glare and tinsel could not recognize the subdued beauties of a spot where Bacon might have mused, or Sidney meditated.

There are two fine pictures here of the present Lord Hartston; one, painted in early childhood, by Hoppner, in a style that might be mistaken for Reynolds; the other, at the age of sixteen, by Lawrence. In this last, the youthful countenance gives indication of that striking expression of superiority—that stern, yet not harsh, thoughtfulness, so manifest now in the original. It is a fine and characteristic portrait. I went yesterday, alone, into the breakfast-room where it hangs, and carefully examined it. I was still standing with my eyes riveted upon the face, when the old lady, whom I had supposed to be driving out with the rest of the party, entered unobserved behind me.

“That is the likeness of the best of sons,” said she, startling me by the unexpected sound of her voice. “You, who have only seen him careworn by the duties of office, and sallow with the unwholesome atmosphere and habits of London, will scarcely recognize poor Eustace in that fine open ingenuous face.”

I felt too guilty to reply; and Lady Hartston, apparently roused to family associations by these allusions to the portrait, took me to her private suit of rooms, and pointed out, with pride and delight the thoughtfulness with which every modern invention, tending to the comfort of age, every piece of furniture suitable to her tastes and conveniences, are constantly selected for her use by her son. “Scarcely a week passes,” said she, “that Eustace does not send me down some trifle to mark his unceasing recollection of his mother.”

Notwithstanding this increased intimacy between us, my awe of Lady Hartston does not, in the slightest degree, subside. Without the *air de grande dame* of the duchess of Mertoneth, she is twice as imposing. Something in her costume or her countenance always brings Lady Rachel Russell to

my mind ; she seems born to be the wife and mother of patriots. Herbert tells me she is the best-informed woman in England ; and Madame de Stael, who ought to be an authority, has assured us that "*tout savoir rend tres indulgent* :" yet indulgent she certainly is *not*. *Elle a l'esprit juste* ; estimates people and things at their real value, and seems superior to that maudlin affectation of a virtue, which compromises every honest feeling under a pretence of philanthropy. I therefore, knowing my weakness, shrink under the clear judgment of Lady Hartston.

Walking with her in a beautiful flower-garden, laid out under the southern shelter of the walls of the old Abbey, I ventured on the commonplace remark, that she must be greatly attached to so delightful a place.

"On the contrary," she replied, "I prefer my own small dower-house in Northamptonshire. Hartston is too vast for a person of my years, who is narrowing down her cares and wishes into a circle, calculated to facilitate the transition into the last and narrowest home. I reside here only till the marriage of my son. Eustace's pursuits and habits prevent his giving his attention to his property ; and I should be sorry to see the abode of his ancestors fall into decay. The time, I hope, is not far distant, when my presence will be superfluous ; and I shall gladly resign my trust to younger hands."

This, I suppose, is an intimation that Lord Hartston is about to be married ; and I find he is expected at the Abbey in ten days time for the official recess. I shall then have left Bedfordshire. I have promised to join Lady Cecilia, who assures me she is seriously ill, at Cowes next week ; and if I can persuade her to accompany me, I will try a total change of scene by a short tour on the continent,—Switzerland, the Rhine,—no matter where, so that I can hear new voices, and see new faces for a time.

—Yes ! it is as I anticipated : Lord Hartston is going to be married. After the carriages had been ordered this morning for our departure from the Abbey, Lady Farrington and Lady Mardynville were announced ; and the severity of air, which I find so overpowering in the old lady, grew more grim than ever, as she rose to receive them. Though seated at some distance, I overheard Lady Farrington accounting for the speedy renewal of her visit, by her desire to be among the first with her felicitations.

Lady Hartston's "I have not the satisfaction of comprehending you," was freezing. But the flow of Lady Farrington's wishy-washy conversation is not easily suspended ; and I soon caught the words, "satisfactory connexion,"—

"charming young woman,"—"approaching nuptials,"—and "domestic felicity." For some minutes, the name of the intended bride escaped me: but at length, the exuberant commendation bestowed by the inveterate twaddler upon the whole family of Rossana, guided my guesses; and her assertion of Lady Sophia's superiority to her sister, decided me, that Lord Penrhyn's cruel charmer was to be the future Lady Hartston. Well, perhaps he could not have chosen better. There cannot be a more sober, regular, or better educated family. His mother said little on the subject; but we took our leave so immediately afterwards, that I had no opportunity to offer my congratulations.

—Another letter from Cecilia, imploring me to join her immediately: I cannot refuse; and the Herberts are so persuaded that I shall return to Hollybridge after a few weeks at Cowes, that they have readily sanctioned my immediate departure. I dare not say anything at present of my continental project. There will be time enough to write, so soon as I shall have arranged my plans with Cecilia. I am satisfied that Herbert will not approve them; but when does he approve any decision of mine?—Happily, he will be too much engrossed by the approaching marriage of his friend, to trouble himself much concerning my proceedings.

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Cowes.—Weary of my journey, weary of myself, weary of every thing! Cecilia's indisposition is evidently the mere result of her anxieties on account of her son; and I have already been able to give a more satisfactory turn to the views of both. I cannot persuade her of the possibility of leaving England; but Clarence is to accompany me to the Continent, as soon as she is well enough to part with us. We cannot travel alone; and I have therefore consented to engage a *dame*, or rather *demoiselle de compagnie*, a certain Miss Vinicombe, who officiated last season as *souffle-doux* to Lady Evelyn Beresford, and was nearly worn into a consumption by arrow-root diet, and the wholesome privations of an invalidery; and whom Lady Cis recommends as an intelligent, accomplished woman. In ten days all will be prepared; and "fresh hopes and climates new" will, I trust, restore that elasticity of spirits which the laborious lightness of London dissipation has so strangely subdued. England has served only to depress me;—on the Continent, I look forward to being thoroughly "*desenmuree*."

~~Calais~~—Another kingdom—another climate—another language—another people—everything changed but my simple, sorry self, and the change, already, how clearly demonstrated! No mistaking the merry sunburned faces around me for those of sober-suited, care-worn England. Everything seems to have expanded; the clouds sail higher—the houses are grown lofty—the courtyards wide. The streets appear angularized by the massive precision of stone architecture—the furniture, by a profusion of marble. In England the same objects crumble down into a lumpish, dilapidated state. With us nothing seems to maintain its perpendicular but the character of the people.

Is it not owing to this absence of the grand that we have forced ourselves to become such devotees of the picturesque? My new friend, Miss Vinicombe, for instance, has the word perpetually in her mouth, and picturesqueifies me out of all patience. During our *trajet* yesterday from the Tower stairs to Calais harbour, she amused us by reciting copious extracts from the diary of my sister journalist, the "*Ennuyée*"; a book I used to sigh over in my teens, but which, having survived the age of sentimentality, I turn from as sickly and affected. Mrs. Trollope has been said to survey men and things as through the window of a hackney-coach; the *Ennuyée* beholds them as through a picture-frame—nay, as through a claude-glass, or *camera obscura*; broad, open daylight is not admitted into her fanciful delineations. Her landscapes are taken from canvass rather than nature; her human beings are those of poets and novelists—not the strong-handed, strong-hearted strugglers of daily life.

But the world is not merely a place of palaces, where pictures are hung up and statues niched, or where Beatrices and Juliefs step daintily on pavements of marble. Sculpture and painting, poetry and romance, are things both beautiful and noble; but nobler still are the every-day workings of the human mind—the progress of nations—the civilization of mankind.—A morbid elegance of soul, or refinement of the imagination, produces less poetical results than many a stern reality. Rubens's picture of the Massacre of the Innocents made the *Ennuyée* "sick," and lo! she cried aloud for an ounce of civet to sweeten her imagination. A mere copy of it made *me* weep—ay, even to suffocation!

My new companion, Miss Wilhelmina Vinicombe, is a votary of this super-sentimental school; but Clarence Delaval will soon laugh down her flights into matter of fact. She favoured us with a touch of Sterne at Dessein's Hotel; but we refused to hear the voice of the charmer, and affronted her into silence.

Off, or rather on, towards Brussels.—French harness, French horses, French postillions, have been often quizzed by travelled gentlemen and travelling ladies; yet, uncouth as they are, they

seem better calculated for the *pavé* of these horrible roads, than the spruce *attelage* of Hounslow posters.

Expansion—still expansion! One wide, vast plain (with the exception of the *monticule* at Cassel) from Calais to Lille; fertile, well cultivated; much flax, now cut and drying; much tobacco, with its rich broad leaf; and long avenues of lofty abele trees shading the road. A hard-featured but healthy-looking peasantry; their bright and many-coloured garments cleaner than their hands and faces, just as *our* cotters are clean in their persons, and dirty and tattered in their attire.

This town or city of Lille professes to be a *chef-d'œuvre* of the art of fortification; and Miss Vinicombe has been dragging poor Clarence along the banks of a muddy canal, to peep after a citadel so ensconced by art and nature as to be visible only to angels and skylarks. For my part, I am overcome by the glare and dust of yesterday's journey; and Clarence has wisely suggested that, as the route from hence to Brussels is uninteresting, we shall profit by the moonlight, and set forth at ten o'clock to-night. Freshness and dew will be welcome indeed, after the villainous smells of two French towns, and the blaze of a September sun.

Hotel de Bellevue, Brussels.—I sadly fear the Vinicombe creature will prove a bore. Her extreme subservience made me fancy at first that I could dispose of her as I pleased; but people sometimes acquire importance from their insignificance, and my companion is so infinitely little, that I am afraid of administering to her the lightest of those *coup de pattes* which I bestow unhesitatingly on Lady Cecilia. Last night, after having bribed our way through the frontier custom-house at Pont-à-Tressin, I felt secure from further interruption; and, burying myself in my corner of the britschka, while Clarence mused in his, resigned myself to the rumination of sweet and bitter fancies; but the Vinicombe seemed determined to make us the confidants of hers!—Our moonlight journey excited the vagaries of her imagination, and every namby-pamby stanza indited, from the beginning of time, to the resplendent lamp of night, was quoted for our edification, in a tone of tenderness which might have sickened the post-horses.

Having elegized us into ill-humour, she began to skirmish through Marlborough's campaigns,—the scene of one of which we were traversing,—in a style of blueism wholly insupportable. I longed to silence her, but dreaded to inflict humiliation on a person evidently labouring in her vocation to afford me entertainment. At last she talked herself asleep; and, by the time we quitted Ath, nothing but Miss Vinicombe's snoring afforded interruption to our meditations.

This morning again she is so troublesomely officious, that my patience is almost at an end; and she has come forth so

armed for conquest, that I dread to appear in public. Sight-seers ought to be scrupulously simple in their dress, to modify the ridicule attached to their attitude of gaping wonder. I have half a mind that she should enjoy St. Gudule and the galleries by herself. *Mais à quoi bon?* She will then inflict upon me, piecemeal at dinner, all the martyrdoms of Rubens. It did not occur to me that this literary *souffre-douleur* of mine—this living edition of the Ladies' Magazine—would prove so miserably *de trop*. I have seen other women get on admirably with their *demoiselles de compagnie*; perhaps they had a better capacity for being toadied.

What a stroke of good fortune, should I find at Spa some eligible dowager in want of a companion, to whom this tiresome woman might be persuaded to attach herself! But there seems the old objection,—I am too young to travel alone with my still younger cousin. Is there, then, after all, *nothing* but a husband in whom one can find at once a safe and agreeable *compagnon de voyage*?

It is very singular that the English papers, usually so officious on such occasions, make not the slightest allusion to Lord Hartston's approaching marriage. I suppose he has taken care to keep them silent. I have received a short letter from Armine, and she, too, says not a word on the subject; she has, in fact, no reason to suppose me interested in the matter.

What a curious air of courtliness in this little capital! In London, one may pass a year or two without knowing it to be a royal residence. In Brussels, I defy you to spend an hour without noticing some shred or patch of regality—an aide-de-camp, with flaunting plume, dashing full speed along the park, or a court footman picking his way in silk stockings. You may even perceive a certain air of pragmatically in the way certain ladies sit stately in their gay open carriages, proclaiming as plainly as deportment can speak, "*We have the entrées—we are of the court.*"

Even so the city itself tells of its destinies. The lower town, with its canals and fevers, is truly the capital of the Low Countries; while the upper or Austrianized Brussels, inoculated with Parisianism by Napoleon, is joyous, airy, architectural, worthy to be the *chef-lieu* of the newest kingdoms, "*Au fait, tout cela n'est que province!*" said little Alfred de la Vanguyon, whom I met this afternoon sauntering in the *Allée Verte*, on his way to Aix la Chapelle. To-night, he accompanies us to the theatre; and Clarence will be the better for a companion of his own sex. With me, the poor boy feels privileged to indulge in tender reminiscences, that cannot but be injurious; for though he chooses to fancy that the Clackmannans have given him hopes, his only chance, and that a poor one, lies in the constancy of his cousin. During his ab-

sence, the influence of her parents will resume its ascendancy with Lady Alicia; and some fine day, Clarence will receive back his letters and lock of hair, and, about six months afterwards, learn from the newspapers, that the only daughter of the Marquis and Marchioness of Clackmannan is about to be led to the hymeneal altar by Lord So and So. It is too much to expect strength of mind or heart from a girl of seventeen, the automaton of English exclusivism and the professed governess-system. It were as reasonable to look for scent and colour in a flower reared in the darkness of a vault. Our Juliets, heaven bless them, are not those of Verona!

Clarence, who is just now almost as romantic as the Viniccombe, is anxious to skip our projected week at Spa, and fly at once to the Rhine, for a peep at "beauty lying in the lap of horror." But at Spa I am to find letters from Hollybridge, of which I cannot disappoint myself. Meanwhile he has done me good service by a private hint to Mademoiselle V. to spare her rhapsodies to-morrow, as we traverse the plain of Waterloo. Such subjects are sacred to *me!* The heroic death of my father has been so deeply and painfully the subject of my contemplations, that I cannot trust myself to visit the details of a field of battle. Thoulouse and the forest of Soignies lie far apart; but there are certain technical words and phrases inseparable from each, which have acquired a terrible importance in my ears. The events which at so early an age deprived me of both my parents, can never lose its importance. Of Waterloo, therefore, not a word!

Liege.—Two charming days on the banks of the Meuse have rendered me almost "*Ennuyée*"ish; and I have even consented to overlook the sin of a sonnet perpetrated on the occasion by the Vinicombe. Well might Napoleon prize the possession of these beautiful provinces, his tenacity of which broke off the preliminaries of the peace of Châtillon, his last chance of salvation. I was reminded of my own Staffordshire, and its silver Trent, of Colebrook Dale and the Severn; but forced to render homage to the superior beauty of the Meuse, which the Vinicombe apostrophizes as the younger and fairer, but less noble, sister of the Rhine. *My* prejudices are strong in favour of *la cadette*: I admire her comely, thriving, prosperous face. The Meuse resembles the throbbing artery of an active kingdom. All around it is industry and movement; and hard indeed must have been the exactions of King William, to have excited against a *roi industriel* the abhorrence of his industry-loving Belgian subjects. As the originator of their most thriving speculations, the memory of the Dutch prince will, however, survive among their grand-children when the new dynasty shall, after the fashion of all dynasties, have taken its turn of unpopularity.

The Vinicombe insisted on visiting the old palace of the Prince Archbishop of Liege, for the purpose of inflicting "Quentin Durward" upon us, and Clarence has accordingly assigned her the *sobriquet* of "The Bore of Ardennes." Why did I not accept the companion so strongly recommended for me to Armine, by Lady Hartston? There was something in the sound of "an officer's widow" which gave the impression of weeds, a memorial, and a thousand other dispiriting associations. I fancied Lady Hartston's protégée must be too prosy and rational. And now,—I am "sprighted with a fool—sprighted and angered worse!"

Spa.—What a cool, tranquil little valley, to have been polluted into a fashionable watering place, a stage of folly for the antics of the *beau monde* of universal Europe. How strange, this evening, after our secluded drive and the rural sublimities of the Meuse, to fall suddenly upon a fashionable cavalcade of the Goslings and De Rawdons; their high-mettled steeds of Hyde Park and Epsom exchanged for ponies of the Ardennes!—"Oh! fashion ill-inhabited! worse than Jove in a thatched house." Notwithstanding their protestations of having found Spa delightful, I am convinced they have been bored to extinction,—the face of joy with which Lord Hampton and Sir Jervis Hall recognized my carriage and welcomed Clarence Delaval, satisfied me that they were as glad of the sight of new faces, as if they had been performing quarantine. Such is usually the case at watering places. People flatter themselves they have been mightily amused by including in their own experience all the legendary entertainments of preceding years; and come away, saying to all the world, as was said by all the world before them, that Leamington, Wiesbaden, or Carlsbad is the most delightful place on earth; after having daily whispered to themselves during their *séjour*, that *last* season may have been pleasant enough, but that in the present one they have been unfortunate,—"uncertain weather,"—"certain persons forcing themselves into society," &c., &c. *Quant à moi*, I am glad I am come so late, I am glad I am going so soon: for, though the environs promise many a pastoral stroll and ride, the Rhine season is too far advanced to admit of loitering. The Gosling set, it seems, have established an exclusive English *table d'hôte* at Spa, of which the device appears to be

"Nul n'aura du Salmis,
Hors nous et nos amis;"

and the general company including Russians, Germans, French, and Belgians, of the highest rank, feel themselves exceedingly ill-used. The Goslingites pretend, on one hand, that people are free to form what conventions they please, in the hotel they occupy; the foreigners contend, on the other, that,

by a proceeding so arrogant and so contrary to the spirit which dictates the customs of all foreign bathing-places, they have declared war against the community. All this is very English; —I shall be glad when we have seen the last of May Fair and its fooleries.

How provoking!—Lord Hampton and the De Rawdons set off for the Rhine on the same day with ourselves; and, without a positive act of ungraciousness, I cannot negative their proposal that we should form a single party. Now, of all injudicious arrangements, one which tends to quarter a caravan of fastidious English people in an inferior continental inn, is the most absurd. We must not even venture to pause, unless where the accommodations are first-rate; so adieu my hopes of smiling villages and rustic hamlets. When shall I ever become *really* mistress of my actions?

The Vincombe, meanwhile, is enchanted! Two men of fashion and a languishing ladyship fully counterbalance the probable evil of an insufficiency of beds and post-horses. I fancy she would offer to sleep with Lady Maria's poodle, rather than lose the accession to our party. Clarence wishes to remain here a few days longer with the Goslings, and is to rejoin me at Ems. I am persuaded his only object is to get rid of the De Rawdons.

Bonn.—Where is the beautiful Rhine—the picturesque Rhine—the river of lays and legends—odes, novels, and romances? As far as we have proceeded, the New River, or the Eanbrink Canal, would form quite as fair a mark for poetry; and, except the companions of my journey, never did I meet with any thing less interesting than its objects! I admit, however, that I am fairly ill with fretting. The letters I received at Spa afforded a climax to my vexations. Herbert and his wife take no pains to conceal their dissatisfaction at my sudden expedition; and, like the voices which attacked Princess Parizade on her mountain, call upon me loudly to return. They pretend that the palladium of my happiness exists in England, and that I am running after new misfortunes. Unluckily I do not and cannot defy augury; and Armine's adjurations have strongly affected my mind. Here, on the wide continent, I feel the want of a friend. Clarence is too young to obtain my confidence, the Vincombe a mere *girouette*; and as to that worldliest of worldly women whom my little cousin calls "*la femme au masque de fer*," Lady Maria de Rawdon, I should as soon dream of pouring my secrets into the Lion's Mouth of Venice as into her ear. By the way, it strikes me as singular that the Herbots so pointedly avoid all allusion to Hartston Abbey and its inhabitants! They give me a long uninteresting message from stupid Lady Tarrington, but not a word of the Hartstons.

How dispiriting is this chilly autumn weather; and how

much more am I inclined for a quiet fireside, than for sight-seeking with a set of listless, supercilious companions! Such an outcry after shawls, cloaks, boas, dressing-boxes, and *Mademoiselle Angélique*, as was raised by *Lady Maria de Rawdon* the moment we arrived at *Aix-la-Chapelle*; such exclamations of horror at the lugubriousness of the vast tapestry-hung apartments provided for us at the hotel of the *Black Eagle*! It was in vain the courier assured her they had been occupied by *Prince Metternich* during the Congress. *Miss Vinicombe* was close at the ear of *Eve* with pedantic protestations that they had been more likely occupied by *Anne of Cleves*, when painted by *Holbein* as the bride of *Henry VIII*.

Nothing but the necessity for an immediate toilet previous to setting forth, as she would have done at *Cheltenham* or *Bath*, to visit "the rooms" and springs, could pacify her fastidious ladyship; while I, whose head was running upon *Charlemagne* and his *Paladius*, apprehended only that the romantic *Wilhelmina* might propose to bear me company to the *Cathedral* and *Stadt Haus*, instead of devoting herself to fashion and the *De Rawdons*. But I might have spared my fears. *Miss Vinicombe* readily accepted *Lady Maria's* invitation to *Burscheid*; and I should have perhaps enjoyed the satisfaction of performing my pilgrimage alone, had not *Lord Hampton* expressed himself curious to have a look into the "rum old church."

"And pray who the devil was 'CAROLO MAGNO?'" inquired his *Lordship* of the *valet-de-place*, when we reached the centre of the nave and stood beside that celebrated grave which even *Napoleon* is said to have contemplated with awe. "Charles the Great? Oh! ah! yes!—I recollect,—*Robertson's Charles V.*"

The patriarch of chivalry seemed to hold no place in *Lord Hampton's* memory, or he might, perhaps, (who knows?) have apostrophized him as *Lucien Bonaparte's Charlemagne*. At the *Hotel-de-Ville*, erected on the foundations of the palace in which the Emperor of Romance beheld the light, we were shown a picture commemorating the first Congress of *Aix-la-Chapelle*, and containing portraits of the diplomats assembled to parcel out Europe into new kingdoms.

"*Voilà*," said the *valet-de-place*, "*le portrait du représentant d'Angleterre.*"

"*Et qui donc?*"

"*Le Chevalier Robinson.*"

"*Crusoe,—no doubt,*" was *Lord Hampton's* facetious rejoinder. "*Et qui, diable, nous a représenté au second?*"

"*Monseigneur le Duc de Vilainton, Elector d'Angleterre,*" replied the man, *not* facetiously, but in sober earnest. And he drew us away from the congress-chamber, to exhibit a monument, now, alas! historical, the *studio* in which *Sir Thomas Lawrence* painted his fine portraits for the gallery of our *Prince Regent*.

"So you have been rubbish-hunting in the old church; what on earth did you find there to amuse you?" inquired Captain De Rawdon, when at the close of the day we met over a most Germanic dinner of *chevreuil*, with stewed apricots, pancakes, and *carpes du Rhin*.

"All sorts of things," was Lord Hampton's comprehensive reply. "In the first place, a pair of bronze doors, through the lions' noses of which, Satan, in proper person, is said to have thrust his fingers—the doors, being much finer, by the way, than the *grille* which our friend Stanhope bought for Elvaston. Then, Charlymain's hunting-horn,—a deused sight cleverer than Goosey's or Dufresne's *cornet-à-piston*. The old Sacristan refused, however, to show us the chemise of the Virgin Mary, and a whole lot of other reliques, without an order from the King of Prussia, or the Archbishop of Amsterdam, or heaven above knows who."

"The chemise of the Virgin! No doubt of stout Irish linen?"

"Can't say. I only know that it is eight feet long; and that in former times, two hundred thousand pilgrims a-day used to come and do it homage."

"I wonder if we could possibly procure an order? It would be capital fun to see the reliques," said Captain De Rawdon.

"Could we not make the attempt, my dear Lady Maria?" added the Vinicombe, in a deprecating voice.

"We shall see the same sort of thing at Cologne, and we have all the churches and reliques of Italy before us!" replied her impassive ladyship. "What can be the use of loitering at Aix-la-Chapelle? Do, pray, let us get on."

On, therefore, we proceeded to Cologne the following morning; Cologne, which, in spite of its dozen churches and one unique cathedral, struck me as the most abject of God's cities. All we read of its swarming monks and beggars of the olden time, all we see of its narrow filthy streets of to-day, sufficiently accounts for the whereabouts of Jean Maria Farina's invention—stupidly attributed by naturalists to the vicinage of the seven mountains, and those varieties of aromatic herbage, some leagues further on the opposite bank of the Rhine. In such cases as the creation of eau de Cologne, the nose is better authority than either ears or eyes.

I proposed setting forward in a single party, for the labour of sight-seeing: being anxious to economize the Vinicombe, lest peradventure Lady Maria should discover her capacities as a bore, before the great object is achieved of having her seduced away from me, to accompany her new patroness into Italy. After having attended, *en masse*, a mass at the military church of St. Geryon, admired the eleven thousand skulls of St. Ursula's virgins, and the three of the magi or kings of Cologne, the gorgeous chest of reliques and the *chef d'œuvre* of Rubens (the

Crucifixion of St. Peter, which made Lord Hampton fancy he was standing on his head), we had unluckily little time left us to devote to the interior of that unrivalled monument of the Gothic architecture, the *Dom Kirch*. We were told that the King of Prussia is taking steps towards its completion. He can do nothing better towards the establishment of his popularity in his Rhenish dominions; which, having endured the fate of most frontier countries, a complexity of masters, are at present sadly to seek in the virtue of loyalty. The Prussian territories, however, look bright and orderly to the eye of a traveller; highly groomed, highly bitted, and highly managed, like a well-kept charger.

Lady Maria still entreating that we might "get on," we proceeded, to sleep at Bonn; where we were threatened by the Vinicombe with a visit from Professor A. W. Von Schlegel, whom the friendship of Madame de Staël once endowed with the reputation of a great man, but whose trivial adoration of his own gingerbread barony, and crosses, great and small, has proved him to be a little one. The Vinicombe, who made his acquaintance at some Skinnerial tiger-feed, when the Baron was lionizing in London, luckily cast her shadow before in a *billet-doux* from Aix-la-Chapelle, announcing her visit to the vicinity of Bonn; and the Baron, so far sage and discriminating, pleads a *migraine* in apology for absence without leave.

Andernach. We should have pushed forward last night at once to Godesberg, but that Lord Hampton is obstinately opposed to all measures suggested by Mrs. Trollope; in consequence of which, we have now taken up our rest for the night in the curious but humble little post-town of Andernach.

On our arrival at a small inn called the "Lily," we received the agreeable intelligence that the two best beds were engaged for a Milor Anglais, likely to arrive at midnight; but it was too late to what Lady Maria calls "get on;" and the care of our courier had already done wonders for our accommodation. But, alas! what *more* than wonders are exacted by a detachment of superfine English travellers, with their supra-superfine lady's maids, and valets-de-chambre! Lady Maria's Mademoiselle Angélique was calling for orange-flower water—my sober waiting-maid for tea and toast; while their mistresses grew impatient for the opening of imperials and cap-boxes, and their masters grumbled over the prospects of dinner, as if their only object in a town on the Rhine had been to eat and drink exactly as they are accustomed to eat and drink in Paris and London.

After an excellent mittag, or mid-day meal, *à la mode Allemande*, eaten at seven o'clock, we were still bewailing over prospective and retrospective ills,—Lord H. and Captain de R. engaged in a *partie d'écarté*,—Lady Maria (who, like the Princess *Mausseline la Sérieuse, voyage pour lire*,) dozing over the

pages of "Léoni,"—and Miss Wilhelmina Vinicombe making tea for us from a kettle that looked as if purloined from one of the pictures of Ostade;—when the flourish of a post-horn was heard, accompanied by the roll of a well-hung English carriage, and followed by volleys of English oaths, such as I have heard when cutting into the line, on a crowded Saturday-night, at the Opera.

"What is the matter below? Who the deuse is arrived?" inquired Lord Hampton of his valet, who soon afterwards came to complain that he could only get three basins and four water-jugs for his Lordship's dressing-room.

"Noting is de matter, milor. Only de *chef* and own man of de Marquis of Lestershir'; de *chef*, vot is come to cook milor's supper and quarrel wid de old laty of de house; and de own gentleman of milor, wot do not find a bed fit for eem, and is gone op to de oder inn."

"Only a valet and a cook—yet so difficult? What insolence!" ejaculated the Vinicombe with much disdain.

"You misapply your articles, my dear Miss Vinicombe," observed Captain de Rawdon. "You are right in saying *a* valet, but it is *the* cook of Lord Leicestershire. Since poor Carême doffed the white night-cap, Leicester's cook has been the first in Europe; he it was who invented the famous *bastions de faisans aux morelles*, and immortalized himself by his *gateaux à la Castebré*. No matter if the valet slept in the hen-roost; but I would give up my own bed to secure an *entrée* really dressed by Grillade."

"Oh! that completely alters the case," observed Miss Vinicombe; "I was not aware it was Grillade."

"But what a bore for us and our tour," interrupted Lady Maria, "if Lord Leicestershire pursues the same route, and every where forestals the best accommodations? I would rather give up the Rhine altogether."

"And I."

"And I."

"And I," echoed the others, after the fashion of the courtiers in *Fleur d'Epine*.

"We might surely loiter a day at Andernach," said I, "and give Lord Leicestershire the start of us."

"Charming suggestion!" ejaculated the Vinicombe. "It is the dearest wish of my heart to visit the establishment of the Herrnhütters, at Neuweid. We might cross the Rhine by the *pont tournant*."

"The establishment of the Heronhunters?" cried Lord Hampton. "Who the deuse are they?"

"The Moravians," said I, anxious to avoid one of my companion's displays of erudition.

"The Moravians? do they embroider as well as those in

England? Then by all means let us go," cried Lady Maria, throwing aside Madame Dudevant's romance, "on to Neuwied directly after breakfast, and so escape this tiresome selfish Lord Leicestershire and his cook for the rest of the journey."

Femme propose, Dieu dispose!

On the morrow, after a tiresome discontented breakfast, we traversed the river to visit the sober-suited establishment of the Protestant monastery. But though we flattered ourselves we had lost much time among the embroidery-stalls of the sisters, and glove-shops of the brothers, the day seemed determined not to be got rid of. It proved to be only two o'clock when it ought to have been four; and the sole resource of our *ennui* was to call into council a sort of half-witted cicerone, or *valet-de-place*; the only slave of the household of the Lily who had not been dazzled out of our service, the preceding night, by the diamond studs of the cook of the Marquis of Leicestershire.

Herr Birtsch had happily an alternative for our despair. We might either visit the menagerie of stuffed Brazilian beasts, collected in his travels by Prince Maximilian, of Wied; or drive over the hills above Andernach, towards a mysterious something among the mountains, which, as well as we could interpret his French-German or German-French, was, would, could, should, or might have been a *volcano*!

"A volcano?" exclaimed the Vincombe.

"A volcano?"

"A volcano?"

"A volcano?"

"A volcano?" re-echoed the rest of our party, dismissing all further consideration for the stuffed beasts of Prince Maximilian, as unworthy the notice of Fellows of the Zoological; while Birtsch, profiting by our enthusiasm, hurried us back to the "Lily," packed us into two crazy German sociables, drawn by still crazier steeds; and away we rumbled over the sand hills, by roads which compelled all but indolent Lady Maria to betake themselves to their mother earth for safety. The Vincombe and Herr Birtsch were soon busy in collecting specimens of lava, and the light vitrified substance of which is composed the famous *trass* or cement of Andernach; while I was equally delighted by some exquisite forest scenery,—groves of fine beeches, carpeted with wild pinks, of a bright crimson colour. Still we ascended and ascended; while the crazy carriages and Lady Maria rumbled and grumbled at a distance; till at length we emerged on a noble platform, commanding a view of the Eisel Mountains.

"My dearest, dearest Mrs. Delaval! admire, I beseech you, the beautiful valley at our feet!" cried Miss Vincombe, ecstasified. "Yonder lovely little lake, amid its green meadows, resembles a sapphire set in emeralds!"

And now was the moment for Cicerone Birtsch to inform us that, according to the theory of Professor Forster, the Lake of Laach, on which we were gazing, occupies the crater of an extinct volcano; that its sands were attractable by the load-stone, that no fish live in its waters, and that the fissure of an adjacent rock gives out carbonic acid gas, like the Neapolitan *grotta del cane*.

Our ignorance was enlightened, our curiosity roused; but other appetites were awakened in their turn.

"All this is very well!" yawned Lord Hampton, "but it is getting monstrous late, and we are monstrous tired, and monstrous hungry. By Jove, we shall never get back to Andernach by day-light."

"By day-light?—no, nor for two hours after dark," was Birtsch's undaunted reply. "Those sands are the *teufel*, and the poor horses already dead-knocked up."

"Then what the deuse did you mean by bringing us along such roads?" cried Captain de Rawdon.

"You wished to pass away the morning—you wished to see the basaltic rocks and the volcano."

"But we did not wish to pass away the evening, and what can we see in the dark?"

"Scarcely your own hand, for there is no moon," replied the phlegmatic Birtsch.

"Attempt those horrible roads again in the dark?" faintly ejaculated Lady Maria, who was now leaning from the calèche to join our council of war. "Quite out of the question! my limbs are already dislocated. I was most rash in suffering myself to be decoyed into so hair-brained an expedition. And this is called seeing the Rhine!"

"You rascal, what are you grinning at?" cried Captain de Rawdon, touching the traitor Birtsch on the shoulder with his whip.

"Only at this good lady," replied the man, pointing to Miss Vinicombe, "who is simple enough to inquire whether the old Kloster, down yonder on the borders of the lake, is a *chateau*! Ho! ho! a *chateau*!"

"You say, then, that the magnificent structure is a convent?" persisted the Vinicombe.

"The greater part of the bulding is a ruin," replied Birtsch; "burnt by the troops of the French Directory, under Custine. The rest is inhabited by the farmer."

"What farmer?" cried Lady Maria, peeishly.

"Did you never hear of my cousin, Farmer Anschutz? Why, he accommodates a power of English ladies and gentlemen, who come to see the Rhine."

"Accommodates!" cried Lord Hampton—"with what—how—where?"

"With dinner, supper, beds—all the usual accommodations sought by travellers. Farmer Anschutz has often a good bit of venison in his larder, and always a good bottle of Rhine wine or Moselle in his cellar."

"The devil he has; then by heavens we will sup with Farmer Anschutz," cried De Rawdon, turning to the rest of the party for approval.

"How enchanting to pass the night in a ruined monastery!" cried Miss Vinicombe.

"Any where rather than on the sand hills," sighed Lady Maria.

"We might despatch this fellow with the carriage back to Andernach for our dressing-boxes," added Lord Hampton.

"And for Angélique and our night-things."

"Our night-things, I entreat, but no Angélique, dearest Lady Maria," interrupted Miss Wilhelmina. "Mrs. Delaval is independent of all service; permit me, therefore, for once to officiate as your *camériste*."

"Well, well, all *that* can be settled *là-bas*," cried Lord Hampton, hungry and cross; and following his advice and the guidance of Birtsch, we found ourselves, a quarter of an hour afterwards, welcomed by Farmer Anschutz into one of the spacious courts of the old monastery. The house was amply stocked with provisions, and the stoves were already lighted in a fine old suite of rooms formerly occupied by the Superior of the convent, and latterly by a noble family of Coblenz; and I am convinced the whole scheme was preorganized by the traitor Birtsch, who probably despatched a foot-passenger across the mountains to forewarn his kinsman, as soon as he had succeeded in starting us from Andernach at so unseemly an hour.

We were, on the whole, better accommodated than at any inn since we left Brussels. Before dinner was over, our luggage (including Ma'mselle Angélique) made its appearance. The adventure amused us; and, in the delight of her soul, the fair Wilhelmina forgave our preceding barbarity in having refused to favour her with a day or night in "Nonnenwerder's cloister pale," lest she should overwhelm us with the "brave Roland," Campbell, Schiller, Byron, and Mrs. Arkwright.

This morning, at an early hour, we quitted our romantic retreat—the lake of Laach with its blue waters, and the convent with its white walls, glittering beautifully in the sunshine; and, guided by the cunning Birtsch, returned to Andernach, and from Andernach "got on" to Coblenz by dinner-time.

Coblenz.—This morning, while visiting Ehrenbreitsten, whose wall, no longer "shattered," has forfeited all its Byronic interest, I had the joy of hearing Miss Wilhelmina Vinicombe begged of me, by Lady Maria, to be her henchwoman. The plan had been settled between them during our night adventure

at the Laachen monastery; and when the Vinicombe coaxingly entreated my forgiveness for having seized upon an occasion so golden to one devoted like herself to the cultivation of the fine arts, as that of visiting the sunny climes of Italy, I was all magnanimity. My consent and benediction on the petitioners were speedily bestowed; and here, at Coblenz, we part; for I have promised to join Clarence Delaval at Emms, in order to have a glimpse of the beautiful Dutchy of Nassau, while the De Rawdons, *et cetera*, are to *dampschiff* it up the Rhine to Mayence.

Rejoiced as I am to get rid of them, I almost regret that I shall lose the sight of Lady Maria's ineffable disdains in the steam-boat, and her care to separate herself from the *olla podrida* of human nature likely to be brought betwixt the wind and her nobility, on its narrow deck. The rhapsodies of Wilhelmina, too, on finding herself actually embarked upon the exulting and abounding river, would have been worth hearing. "*Mais enfin, je leur ai fait mes adieux!*"

Emmsbaden.—Happy, thrice happy, that broad-clothed moiety of the human species, which finds itself

— "free to rove,"

free and unquestioned through the wilds and tames of the world, seeking amusement wherever it is to be found—by stage-coach, *malleposte*, *eil-wagen*, steam-packet, ferry-boat, or *table d'hôte*—unaccountable to that brocaded Cinderella, that sister of diamond dust, Madam Etiquette—untrammelled by the galling harness of ropes, the scrutiny of the vulgar. A woman is like a schoolboy's pet, tortured by constant care. She must not set her foot there—she must not be exposed to contact here; she must step upon roses, not upon the common earth. She must not inhale the ordinary atmosphere, but be an ambrosia-fed, feeble, shrieveless, helpless dawdle, in order to merit the epithet of "femine." Like the Strasburg goose, whose morbid merit consists in being all *foie-gras*, she must be "all heart," "a creature of the affections," sans sense, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything!

The distinctions of my caste, for instance, have compelled me to travel *en grande dame* with the De Rawdons, fancying my comfort or my pride affected by the superior appointments of a Lord Leicestershire, and pining after gunpowder tea and pine-apple ice; while Clarence Delaval, who met me here on my arrival, has been roughing it to his heart's content, and visiting a thousand interesting spots, a thousand curious monuments, calculated to leave an indelible impression on his mind. I allow something for the love-lorn shepherd's mood of enthusiasm, but envy him, meanwhile, the independence of his tour.

This bathing village of Emms stands in a lovely valley on the *Lahn*; still higher on whose banks, we have this morning

visited the fine old ruined Castles of Nassau and Stein. But it is too late to proceed to Schwalbach and Schlangenbad. What an absurd mistake on the part of English fashionables, who love to loiter in London till the first day of grouse-shooting gives a signal for the general clearance, to fancy that foreign bathing-places are within scope of their enjoyment! Of these, the season begins, like that of London, in May, and ends (somewhat later) in the beginning of September. After that period, you find only a few Russians and an English family or so, mere birds of passage. The apartments have no stoves or fire-places, the beds no curtains. All at Emms is prepared for summer scene and season; the bands of music have now departed city-ward; the tents and awnings are furled, the fancy shops closed, and their divers-costumed tenants are vanished. To-morrow, therefore, we, too, depart through Coblenz towards the Rheingau, lest we should hazard the loss of this fine weather on the Rhine. We set forth under happier auspices than from Aix-la-Chapelle. The De Rawdons have escaped Lord Leicestershire; I, the Vinicombe and *them*; and I have entered into a covenant with Clarence not to mention Alicia Spottiswoode's name above twenty times in the twenty-four hours. The pleasantest part of our tour is luckily before us.

Frankfort.—Oh! Seged, King of Ethiopia, how little have succeeding generations profited by thy sad experience! How often and how sanguinely have I anticipated the spectacle of the Rheingau with its vintage—the Rhine-rocks with their castellated ruins—the gravestones of departed despotism; and behold, three days ago, I reached, in full exultation, the confines of my promised land! But lo! no sooner did I gain sight of the towers of Marksburg, than down came a heavy mist—a drizzling rain—an incessant rain—a hopeless rain;—till, like the hero of Coleridge's tragedy, we began to exclaim,

“Drip,—drip,—drip,—
There's nothing here but dripping.”

Neither Sternfels nor Lichtenstein—Bacharach nor the Pfalz—the Lurleyberg nor the Mänse-Thurm could we obtain a glimpse of! It rained throughout the night we slept at Bingen; it rained throughout the night we slept at Mayence. We departed for Wiesbaden in the rain; visited, in the rain, the deserted Kursaal; listened, under an umbrella, to the bubbling of the springs; gave up in despair an excursion to the palace of Biberich; submitted to the nutmeg-gratishness of a bath encrusted with the sulphureous deposit of the Wiesbaden waters; set off at length in the rain for Frankfort; and at Frankfort (still in the rain) are we arrived.

“It may seem an impertinence on the part of English people to

“D—n the climate and complain of spleen,”

said Clarence as we took our desolate abode in the hotel de Russie, "but when did one ever experience in England such a detestable month of September!"

We managed, however, to spend last night a tolerably agreeable hour at the theatre; in the box of Koch the courteous, British consul, and banker to the British. Frankfort has an excellent orchestra, but the theatre is plain, and the audience plainer. I discerned, and fancied I even "nosed in the lobby," symptoms of the synagogue; but the scatterings of Israel constituted, at all events, the best-looking portion of the spectators. The opera was Paer's "Sargines, or the Pupil of Love;" a fine fat pupil, a fussy girl thrust into boy's clothes, much resembling Mrs. Charles K. at five-and-forty, in the part of the "Blind Boy."

The fine arts are much cultivated in this money-making city. It has a fine gallery of pictures, bequeathed by a rich banker to the public; and to-day we visited Bethmann's collection, containing Danneker's far-famed Ariadne—which strikes me as a manifest plagiarism from one of the most beautiful frescos found at Herculaneum—a nymph reclining on the back of a monster, to the lips of which she presents a patera, supposed to be allegorical of "Hope nourishing a chimera."

Heidelberg.—I forgave the weather for splashing and miring us in the streets of Darmstadt and Mannheim; for what was to be seen in either, saving the quaint courtliness one fancies to oneself in childhood, of those cities in fairy-tales, where "Once upon a time there lived a king and queen?" But here,—here within view of a ruined castle, the last strong-hold of chivalry, and, judging from the little I can discern, a spot worthy to have been the original stage of "Love's Labour Lost," with its fanciful prince and princesses, and still more fanciful clowns, I cannot forgive the sun for playing me false. But, alas! as I look upwards to the castle, it is enveloped in a scottish mist; while the swollen Neckar wears a sullen lead-colour complexion below. Nothing under a web-footed fowl could venture forth to explore the half-deluged earth; and having wasted twenty-four hours here in patience and haze, nothing remains but to be off to Carlsruhe, where we have less to excite expectation, and consequently, less to disappoint us.

7th Oct., Baden Baden.—And here, then, at last I complete the German portion of my unlucky tour; and such is *my* melancholy edition of an "Autumn on the Rhine!" Are travels such as these, worthy the cost and labour bestowed on them; and is not mine a type of most fashionable excursions? Every spring, about the idle time of the Easter holidays, and every autumn, at about the yawning season of country visits, Messrs. * * * * and * * * * put forth certain charlatanic volumes, head and tail-pieced with foreign wonders, to decoy one into perusal and imitation.—"Six weeks on the Danube." "A Peep at the

Carpathian Mountains." "The Rhine Re-visited;" or "The Brunnens of Nassau." The stay-at-homes are enraptured! Forgetting that the tourist who astonishes them with written pictures and painted philosophy, is probably some individual released from professional labours or domestic drudgery, sent forth with twice his usual allotment of pleasure-money in his pocket, to enjoy himself for a season;—some individual who, under the same excitement, would have found as much to say of Greenwich Park, or Richmond Hill;—they resolve to peep, in their turn, at the Carpathians—dampschiff it up the Rhine—or seek inspiration in the Brunnens of Nassau!

Blasés with the enjoyments of a brilliant existence, they set languidly forth, oppressed by the comforts and conveniences provided for their journey. But, after the efforts of their own French cook, the *cuisine* of inns and table d'hôtes disgusts them. Their courier takes care to secure them against piquant adventures,—the way before them is made as straight and safe as from London to York, and traversed as rapidly as foreign post-horses can be made to trot. They see nothing, they hear nothing, they understand nothing,—nothing is considered worthy their sublime notice. On arriving in a town they are told that, "*Il n'y a absolument rien qui mérite l'attention de mille;*" or, "*Miladi n'aura que le temps pour faire son petit repas. D'ailleurs il n'y a rien de curieux dans ce petit bourgade.*" And away go my lord and my lady, satisfied in their conscience that the book-maker, who promised so much, was an impostor. "But, then, what better can be expected of those literary men?" For my part, were I to describe the Rhine according to my own perceptions, I should write myself down an ass, and the tour a *pèlerinage de pas perdus*.

More people are left at Baden than we found remaining at any other German bathing-place; and, full or deserted, the beauty of the spot is truly a sufficient attraction. I have engaged comfortable apartments for a fortnight; for change of climate, or unchangeability of melancholy thoughts, has rendered me really ill. I must rest—I must recruit my spirits; Clarence is going on an excursion through the Black Forest to Stutgardt, while I remain here; and, on his return, we shall set forth together to Paris.

The first persons I met on my arrival, were Sir Henry Andover and his aunt, Lady Sarah, near relatives of the De Rawdons, who assure me that during her *séjour* here, Lady Maria seemed enchanted with her new companion. Sir Henry has introduced me to a pleasant little coterie, among whom are the Comte and Comtesse de Nivelles, Parisians loitering away their autumn till the gay season of Paris commences. Princess Dragonitski, the decayed beauty and diplomatist, who, having figured as Ambassadress at half the courts in Europe, fancies

she has held half the sovereigns in Europe, like a pouncet-box, betwixt her forefinger and thumb; and Mrs. Algernon Carrington, a woman who appears to have been born "*bored*," and experienced since only modifications of the sensation, having a husband too enamoured of mysteries to speak above his breath. They are all *de très bonne compagnie*; and, during Clarence's absence, I shall find them a resource. Lady Sarah has made a party (nothing seems to be done here without making a party) to introduce me to the Black Forest, and the Castle of Eberstein; but I feel ill and weary, and shall, if possible, decline the exertion.

Letters from England—letters from Wardencliff and Hollybridge:—all well—all disagreeable. Lady Cecilia blames herself, and, by implication, me, for having suffered Clarence to quit England; and my sister's letters are still more vexatious. Some one, it seems, has written home to some one (who has made it his business to acquaint Herbert with the report,) that "the gay widow, Mrs. Delaval, is dashing about at all the German bathing-places, *tête-à-tête* with a dandy young gentleman, whom she calls her cousin; having packed off her companion as soon as she reached the continent." This "some one" is evidently a lady's maid in correspondence with her associates of the steward's room, and if she had said *splashing* instead of *dashing* with respect to my rainy excursion to Wiesbaden, I would have forgiven her! The Herberts, however, take the thing in earnest, and express themselves much concerned that I should have laid myself open to such observation; blaming me severely for having sanctioned the Vinicombe's departure. My selection of her they admit was injudicious, but, having so chosen, I ought to have abided by my choice; that is, I ought to have rendered my tour a matter of penance. These reports were mentioned in the first instance at a dinner party at Hartston Abbey, where they produced universal surprise. This is the first time Armine has condescended to allude to her favourite neighbours since my departure from England; and even now not a word of Lord Hartston's marriage—not a word of the bride! Perhaps my sister imagines the subject likely to mortify me—to give me pain? She is mistaken! Nothing can exceed my indifference towards the family. Not, indeed, that I am gratified to find myself exposed to their animadversions. I do not wish old Lady Hartston, or any other respectable person, to believe me so careless of self-respect as to be travelling alone on the continent with "a young gentleman whom I *call* a cousin." But to explain the affair would be an unnecessary derogation. Let them, in short, say and think what they will, it will only be adding a shade of criminality to the faults and follies already so unjustly imputed to me. I must try to become callous to the opinion of the world.

But my health is, alas! declining under these contrarieties.

As I was sitting this morning sad and silent over my *café au lait*, in came the Carringtons. After the usual civilities, Mr. C. whispered to his wife, with a most portentous visage, that they had better retire.

“Why retire?”

“Do you not perceive,” said he in the same lugubrious whisper, “that something has occurred—that——”

“Has any thing occurred?” said Mrs. Carrington, addressing me in a tone of frankness extremely distressing to her husband.

“Nothing, I assure you. But I do not find the air of Baden agree with me,—I am not very well.”

“You are perfectly well, I assure you,—you are only horridly bored,” replied Mrs. C.; “Baden is a place that bores *me* to extermination; but Algernon is fond of it because so many diplomatists come here *pour se délasser*. I was bored here even when the place was full and gay; what must *you* be now there is scarcely any one left!”

“I cannot attribute my illness to ennui. Recollect that I have been but two days in the place.”

“Quite enough.”

“I have been making the tour of the Rhine.”

“The tour of the Rhine! No wonder you are bored! Bad inns—bad dinners—beds too short—bills too long—pursued by the filthy fumes of tobacco from Cologne to Mayence, and dislocating your neck by staring up out of the carriage windows at castles not in the air, but in the clouds. I know not a more surpassing bore!”

“With respect to the castles——”

“And then the vintage, which sounds so poetically in one of Neukomm’s songs or Lockhart’s novels! What does one really see of the vintage? A set of blear-eyed, dirty old women in linsey-woolsey petticoats, hobbling down the muddy *côtes* with wooden hods on their backs, looking like the pails they carry to English pigs, and containing a filthy-looking mash resembling what English pigs are made to feed on! They took me into the vineyards at Rüdesheim and Hochheim, to see this dainty operation;—never was so bored in my life!”

“Frankfort seems to be a fine city.”

“The week we passed there was very boring.”

“Yet, I assure you, Mrs. Delaval,” interrupted her husband, in a low, significant voice, “there were no fewer than three reigning princes incog. in the hotel where we lodged, and the King of Wirtemberg was expected. It was a singular coincidence; something must have been in the wind, but we could never make it out. Princess Dragonitski says——”

“Oh! pray don’t repeat that boring woman’s dogmatics! Princess Dragonitski proses about those duodecimo German princes *as if* they were indebted to her for their thrones, and *as if a dozen of them were equal in importance to her groan of*

the chambers. The woman has been buying and selling politics so long, that she talks of them in the jargon of a grocer's wife in treating of her teas and sugars. She looks upon courts and ministers as mere commodities. Princess Dragonitaki is a regular bore."

"My dear Jane!" remonstrated her husband, "recollect yourself; recollect the influence of the Princess. You are really most indiscreet."

"Do not be uneasy about her influence, as regards *me*!" said Mrs. Carrington, laughing. "She never condescends to exercise it over anything within two thousand miles of her. No doubt it is just now working a revolution in Mingrelia, or displacing a minister in Pekin, or perhaps manœuvring to get an article inserted in the Baltimore Evening Post. Believe me, there is nothing and nobody in Baden who would provoke a scratch of Princess Dragonitski's pen, or a curl of her lip."

At this moment the Princess herself glided smilingly and gracefully into the room, and expressed so much interest about my *air abattu*, that I was soon enlisted among her partizans. The Nivelles entering immediately afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Carrington, in pity to the size of my *salon*, took their leave.

Princess Dragonitski immediately accosted the Count de Nivelles with her usual inquiry for news, although, as I anticipated, the latest he had to communicate was stale to *her* eight-and-forty hours ago. She knows every thing, yet still goes on asking, and stopping the reply upon your lips with—"Yes,—I know—I know!" Between knowing and guessing, she is, in fact, too acute for ordinary conversation; and her interest in the trivial topics of Baden is so manifestly assumed, that her very civility becomes humiliating.

"There goes a woman," said the Count de Nivelles, when in her turn the Princess quitted the room, leaving her character behind, "who is, in reality as much 'bored' among us as the little Carrington pretends to be. The little Carrington has been, in fact, enchanted here, from finding herself a personage at Baden, though overlooked in London and at Paris; but it is her *métier* to be *ennuyée*; and, to do her justice, the expression of her languishing blue eyes is vastly charming when she pronounces herself 'bored to extinction.' The Dragonitski, on the contrary, who cares for nothing beneath the rank of a king or kaiser, (I humbly beg her pardon—I mean the *premier ministre* of a king or kaiser,) is only apprehensive lest we should discover how cheap, how very cheap, how dog-cheap, how dirt-cheap, she holds us! I, for my part, maintain some trifling value in her estimation, because my wife is grand-niece to the Minister of War! I cannot promise you that she will think as much of Mrs. Delaval."

Heigho! I am already tired of these people! I am already what Mrs. Carrington calls "bored;"—I, who can scarcely re-

member feeling *enmuyée* during my whole exile at Ballyshumna! I certainly *must* be ill—I can hold out no longer!

November 14th.—A whole month without inscribing a line in my Diary! Ill, and actually in danger, and at Baden, without a creature remaining in the place, except a few sad, consumptive souls, whose bodies are evidently predestined to mingle with its dust. The attack of fever from which I have been suffering, (the result, they say, of change of climate and diet; but they say so in utter ignorance of the moral influence of the real origin of all) has left me so wretchedly weak, that the mere spectacle of these miserable individuals crawling up and down the promenade under my windows disturbs me; and the moment I am strong enough to set forth on my way to Paris—*en route!* The Nivelles, who went yesterday, have ordered rooms for me at Strasburg and Nancy.

I was so overcome, indeed, by the severity of my illness, that I could not interest myself as at any other period in the tidings from England, which awaited Clarence on his return here from Stutgardt; not, indeed, that the poor fellow saw any cause for rejoicing in the news that his father had got him appointed *attaché* at Vienna, instead of allowing him to pass the winter at Paris. But he obeyed with a tolerable grace, and I have already received letters announcing his safe arrival, his presentation to the emperor, and a determination to be as merry and wise under his tribulations as circumstances will allow. I am sorry to lose my agreeable *compagnon de voyage*, but I feel that his father has judged rightly. Fortunately, I have a great many friends about to spend the carnival in Paris.

NANCY.—How brightly beams this gay wood-fire after the stoves of Germany, which produce upon one the effect of living in company with a person blind! The people here seem courteous and animated, after the living lumber by which I have lately been surrounded. Welcome—welcome, light-hearted France!

FONTAINEBLEAU.—I have deviated from my road for a peep at this fine old historical palace, fraught with reminiscences of *le roi des preux*, and the “*adieux de Napoleon*.” To-morrow afternoon I shall be in Paris, among new people and new pleasures; and the excitement of expectation seems to have effaced all remembrance of my tedious illness. I expect to find there despatches from England, containing letters of introduction from the Delavals and Lady Southam, which will be the means of procuring me agreeable society for the winter.

Once more, then, I am on the threshold of a strange city! To a poor weak woman, the approach to Paris is more exciting than even the approach to London; for London is the city of business,—Paris of pleasure; London the emporium of sense,—Paris of nonsense; London a wood of thriving timber,—Paris a garden of ever-varying flowers. London is the mighty

throne whence the world is legislated,—Paris the graceful temple whence it is civilized. London is the stern and helmeted Pallas,—Paris the many-hued Iris. London is, in short, the capital for men, and Paris for women!

There we live, and move, and have a being worthy to be so called. There we still exercise an influence in society. There we are not only allowed to talk, but still strangers are earnestly called upon to listen. There, if I am to believe a thousand travelled men and women, we exercise the prerogative which, during the last century, rendered the reign of Louis XV. a reign of *cotillons*, and conducted the husband of Marie Antoinette to the scaffold.

Paris is, *par excellence*, moreover, the fountain-head of fashion. When a well-dressed woman enters a London ball-room, it is instantly asserted that she receives from Paris all the appliances and means which render her irresistible;—her *coiffeur* arrives from Paris every spring, and her shoes are forwarded by Melnotte in the despatch-bag. Have you a pretty piece of trinketry on your table, or a handsome vase on your chimney-piece, every admiring visiter is sure to observe, “It is evidently Parisian.” No one presumes to wear an artificial flower manufactured elsewhere than in the Rue de Richelieu, or to appear in a hat which has not *le cachet d'Herbault*.

And now I am at length arrived at this El Dorado of frivolity and fancy. The modes I used to receive with such glee in London, I shall now snatch fresh from the mint; and whereas universal Europe derives her cooks, milliners, and dancing-masters from this land of taste, I shall probably, for the first time, hail the perfection of *la cuisine et les graces*. (In grateful remembrance of George Hanton, I yield precedence to the *casserole!*)

For some time to come, however, I will eat, drink, dress, and be merry, without committing to paper the commentations of my wondering ignorance. Let me be fairly *orientée*, before I presume to tell myself what I think of *la grande nation*, which thinks so much of itself. Coleridge observes, that Frenchmen are like grains of gunpowder, dirty and despicable singly, but tremendous in the mass; now, as I happen highly to estimate a few separate grains, such as little Vauguyon and Monsieur de Nivelles, I may perhaps also reverse the philosopher's opinion, and despise the million. * * * * *

Paris, December 27th, Rue de Rivoli.—I promised and vowed, on the day of my arrival, that I would not commit to inscription a single observation till I had rubbed off my newness by a month's residence in this gay busy town. It is the custom to say that first impressions are the truest. Certainly *not*, as regards the phases of society in a strange country, where one is obliged to trust largely to the exposition of others. In Paris, for instance, more than in any place I ever visited, people see

with the eyes of their *clique*; and political events have tended to create so many, and of such antipodal qualities, that little reliance is to be placed on such blind guides.

Par exemple!—After despatching various letters of introduction, which I had received from England, the two first visits I received were from the young Comtesse de Mérinville, daughter to one of Napoleon's *parvenu* generals, wife to a member of the present royal household; and the Marquise de Bretonvilliers, an ultra of the Faubourg St. Germain, descended from one of those beatific holy Roman-Empire families, whose letters of nobility are dated from the ark.

First came my pretty Comtesse, all grace and gaiety, instructing me in the measures to be taken to secure a private presentation at the Tuileries; which, thanks to my poor father's former intimacy with Louis Philippe, will, I find, be easily accomplished.

"You would otherwise," said Madame de Merinville, "have been obliged to wait for the *cohue* of the first of January; when all your countrywomen who can command a satin gown thrust themselves into the palace, so as to render the ceremony of presentation most tedious to their majesties—most unsatisfactory to the better kind of English—and all for the satisfaction of figuring afterwards at our mob-balls of four thousand nobodies, given as a sugar-plum to the National Guard, and to promote the interests of trade. The *petits-bals de la cour* you will find a quite different affair; and even now, at the Queen's weekly receptions, you will see *sout ce qu'il-y-a dé mieux de la société*."

"With the exception, of course, of the Carlists?" I observed, inconsiderately:

"The Carlists?" cried Madame de Merinville, laughing immoderately. "Mais c'est de l'*histoire ancienne*! Who talks of the Carlists *now*? They are as old as the *Ligue*! We have with *us* all those worth gaining over. You will even see in the Queen's circle several of the set called exclusively *les dames du petit château* in the time of Madame. As for the rest, they remain *faisant la moue* in their lumbering old hotels of the Faubourg; some, because the court does not think it worth while to buy them above their value; others, because they are still uncertain whether the present order of things is permanent."

"You will not allow them the honours of martyrdom!" said I.

"I have never esteemed the Carlists since that unlucky affair of Madame de Lucchesi-Palli;" she replied. "They were so indulgent to her *foiblesse*—so fierce against her marriage. They forgave her the child (even were it the offspring of a valet)—they have not yet forgiven her a *mésalliance*."

"Yet the family of Lucchesi-Palli is one of the noblest in Sicily!"

"The mother of Henri V. ought not to have espoused a sub-

ject. *Du reste*, it provokes them beyond measure, that not a disparaging word can be said of our court of to-day. The domestic virtues of the King and Queen, the elegance and propriety of the Princesses, the distinguished air of the young Princes, the high character of the various members of the household, are obstacles they cannot get over. Since the reign of Napoleon (the most magnificent since the days of Louis XIV.) never was the court of France so brilliant as now. So many distinguished foreigners of all nations pass the winter in Paris: the troubles of Spain and Portugal—the cholera in Italy—the tyranny of St. Petersburg—the fogs of the Thames—secure us all that is illustrious and wealthy in Europe. *Enfin*, you will see and judge for yourself; and, with the court and *corps diplomatique*, you will have quite enough to occupy your engagements."

Next arrives my *Marquise*; not half so well dressed—not half so *rayonnante*—not half so gifted with the ease that places others at their ease; but endowed with a certain half-formal air of high-breeding, highly characteristic of the *grande dame*.—She began with polite inquiries after my health, my journey, and the health and happiness of Lady Southam, from whom I had received my introduction to her acquaintance, and ended with a polite offer to present me to the whole of hers. Nothing could exceed her regret that I should have lodged myself in so detestable a quarter as the Rue de Rivoli.

I ventured a few apologetic words in favour of its cheerfulness, its atmosphere, its central position. "I find myself," said I, "in the neighbourhood of all my friends."

"Yes; I believe the English lodge principally in this noisy trading quarter," she replied. "The sound of the omnibuses from morning till night would distract us who are accustomed to hotels, *entre cour et jardin*. But I fancy in London you have no courtyards? You accustom yourselves at an early age to the rumbling of carts and coaches!"

I explained the advantage produced by our vaulted streets, and the area interposing between the vibration of the carriage-way and the foundation of our houses.

"True,—you have a subterranean story, your servants inhabit vaults; every country has its peculiarities. They sleep, too, poor creatures, I am told, under the leads! Quite Venetian!—condemned to the *pozzi* and the *piombi*! In France, on the contrary, we are very careful of our domestics. Most of them are retainers, born on our lands, who remain with us till they are past service. I am alluding, of course, to the good old families; not to the *canaille* of the present day, who are apprehensive of speaking to their domestics, lest they should happen to find a cousin in their *frotteur*."

To change the conversation, I described the pleasure I had

experienced the preceding night in witnessing the performance of Madame Volnys,—so great a favourite in England.

“It is no longer the custom here to frequent *les petits spectacles*,” said she, coldly. “Even at the *Français* I have been obliged to give up my box, *depuis qu'on nous a donné du Hugo!* The only place where a person can with propriety be seen, is *Les Bouffes*.”

“I have been so fortunate as to secure a very good box there,” said I.

“For which night?”

“The Saturdays.”

“That was wrong. Saturday is peculiarly the English night;—because several of our best houses in the faubourg *receive*. You will meet no one of society at the Italian Opera on Saturday nights.

“I have at present for Saturdays only the parties of Madame R—,” said I; “and I believe they occur but once a fortnight.”

“The parties of *whom?*” cried the Marchioness, aghast.

“At the *Hôtel de Ville*,” I replied, fancying I had improperly pronounced the name of the *Préfet de la Seine*.

“But you do not actually propose to descend to such society as *that?*” exclaimed Madame de Bretonvilliers. “I beseech you, have a care!—A first mistaken step in Paris is irretrievable!—Once seen, for instance, among those people at the *Tuilleries*, and you are lost! We forgive the Ambassadress and her family, because, from her official position, the derogation is unavoidable. But with others we are obliged to be rigorous; such is the motive which, with few exceptions, excludes the English from good society. Your nation is unfortunate. Two of the most glaringly ill-formed circles here are those of two English ladies who have degraded themselves by marriages with wealthy *parvenus*.”

I ventured to observe that I had heard the houses to which she alluded spoken of as two of the most brilliant in Paris.

“For those who estimate brilliancy by the number of bougies in the lustres,” she replied, scornfully. “But such a mixture!—The remnants of the empire,—the nameless nothings of the Revolution of July;—artists,—men of letters,—heaven knows what!—There are the Dukes and Duchesses of This and That, who dare not even be announced by their Twelfth-Night titles in presence of the Ambassadors of Austria and Russia,—to whose sovereigns the fiefs, whose honours they have assumed, of right belong.”

“I fancied,” said I—growing bolder as I became amused by her bigotry, “that many of the ancient families of France had ceded now, as in the time of the Emperor, to the force of the tide; and were to be met with even in the circle of their Majesties?”

“In the circle of *Louis Philippe?* Yes! at all periods of po-

litical history there will be found renegades and apostates. But, of the very few of the *ancien régime*, who have degraded themselves by joining the new order of things, a few are decrepit peers of France in their dotage, who think it their duty to make their bow to the throne, let who will be seated there; others are indigent parents of large families who have sons to provide for,—and a few,—giddy young people, who flock to the sound of a *violon*, or a *cor-de-chasse*,—boys who cannot give up the hutting parties of the Duke of Orleans, or frivolous women who have been cajoled by his attentions."

"The address of the two elder Princes was much admired in England," said I. "I remember one night at a party at our minister, Lord G——'s, seeing the Duke of Orleans back out of the room, after taking leave of one of our royal Princes, with a grace that would have done honour to Louis XIV."

"The young man has not quite lost the good air he acquired in the *salons* of Charles X.," observed the prejudiced Marchioness. "But *we* think better of the Duke of Nemours; he is said to be a legitimist at heart. The princesses, I believe, are worthy young women, *un peu bourgeois*, but perfectly well-conducted."

Having engaged me to attend her weekly *récceptions*, the Marchioness curtsied with the most formidable politeness, and ceremoniously withdrew. The disgust with which I doubtless inspired her must have been sadly increased by meeting in my antechamber Madame Lemaître wife of one of the first bankers in Paris, on whose house I have letters of credit.

Madame Lemaître is neither so young as my pretty little courtieress, nor so old as my ultra, but just at the age when a Frenchwoman, misdoubting her attractions, begins to rely upon the merits of her toilet, and acquires a certain restless gayety of assumed youthfulness. I found her very voluble, full of pet phrases, and a code of fashionability founded on the influence of her gorgeous hotel in the Chaussée d'Antin, her boxes at all the theatres, her diamonds and pearls, her carriages and horses, and maitres d'hôtel, and chasseurs, and villa at Bellevue. She had the air of a London fine lady *manquée*, for her splendour did not sit easily. She threw open her pelisse of magnificent sable only to display the exquisite cachemire dress worn beneath.

Overwhelming me with civility, she invited me to a dinner on Sunday next, gave me her box at the French opera for the new ballet, and insisted on obtaining me invitations to the balls of Mesdames This, That, and the Other, names better known, I suspect, at the Bourse, than to the Almanach of Saxe Gotha. I shall go to *all*, for I want to acquaint myself with this new world, and am not afraid, like poor Madame de Bretonvilliers, committing myself.

And now, having written so much of people, a word or two of things. In this city, where so much is vast and splendid, so

much mean and barbarous, I am constantly startled by incongruities. One finds, to be sure, the "*pierre précieuse*," but, like the diamond in the fable, it is found "*en grattant le fumier*." There is great elegance and great coarseness, much magnificence and much shabbiness. The palaces, the public buildings, many of the private hotels, are noble and nobly situated; but, with few exceptions, the streets are so narrow, dirty, and disgusting, that the lanes of our own city would gain by comparison. The ill-kept, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated staircases, in common to a dozen families, render it disagreeable to pay visits or to go shopping, for most of the superior *magazines* are established without show on a first, second, third, or even fourth story; indeed, in many commercial streets, the best apartments are on the second floor, on account of the deficiency of light and air beneath. The houses in the Place Vendôme are among the finest in Paris, but grand and incommodious; those of the Rue de Provence quarter the most convenient; those of the Faubourg St. Honoré and Ville l'Évêque, with their charming gardens, the most agreeable; and those of the fine dull old streets of the Faubourg St. Germain the most spacious, aristocratic, gloomy, and it is said, unwholesome. At the present season, there is little morning movement in the streets; few carriages but those of foreigners and official people are stirring. After dinner commence the visits, the *spectacles*, the parties, when all is vivacity and noise. The higher orders have not the habit of what they call "*courir*," like the shop-hunting English. They have not much money to throw away; and, with the exception of the banking, stock-brokering set, which represents the *fermiers généraux* of former days, do not seem fond of baubles. It is only just now, when they are purchasing their *étrennes* for the first of January, that they display the passion for knick-knacks we are apt to attribute to the French. But as, according to the adage,

"The children of Holland take pleasure in making,
What the children of England take pleasure in breaking;"

I believe their *bijouterie* and *nouveautés* are chiefly manufactured for the foreign markets. Of this I am certain, that there is not a shop in Paris which displays a fourth part of the collection I have seen exhibited at Howell and James's. By the way, I must observe, that the banker's wife alone talked "*toilette*" to me. Madame Lemaitre was urgent in recommending me to place myself in the hands of such and such tradespeople, and seemed to think my salvation or my gentility must depend on being dressed by Palmyre, Herbault, Fossin, Edouard, Nattier, and Melnotte. Madame de Mérinville said nothing on the subject; from the force of custom, *she* fancied it impossible that any others could be employed; while Madame de Bretonvilliers was silent, from feeling self assured that no *femme comme il faut* can possibly appear ill-dressed.

— Just returned from my presentation; a far less formal affair than I expected. I am charmed with the King and Queen — the Queen most, though the former spoke to me of my father with tears in his eyes. The princesses have the air of well-bred, well-born English girls; the princes I had seen in London. We sat round a circular table, and the time seemed less tedious than is usual in a royal circle. I am now privileged to attend the weekly receptions at the Tuileries; but on Tuesday and Wednesday next will be the grand annual *réceptions*, at which every one makes it a point to pay his compliments to the royal family.

Sunday.—To-day, my dinner at my banker's—a far more solemn festival than my *début* at the Tuileries! At six, and precisely,—for I find the French exact to a minute in keeping engagements,—I was ushered through a throng of ill-looking servants in new, ill-made livery, through a fine suite of rooms to a *salon* hung with white and gold, with massive gold fringes. Monsieur Lemaître, who met me at the door, led me, bowing at every step, to his lady, occupying a *fautueil* in the place of honour. Several guests were already collected; among those who immediately followed, I distinguished the names of three of the ministers and their wives; and in a few minutes folding-doors were thrown open, and a solemn-looking *maître d'hôtel* whispered—“*Madame est servie.*” There was nothing of that horrible before-dinner pause—that chasm to be filled up with small-talk—so invariably produced in London by the want of punctuality of unpolite guests, or an unaccomplished cook; and, our places at table being pointed out by a written card in each plate, no confusion arose in taking our seats. I was placed between the master of the house and one of the most eminent of the ministers—a little, under-bred, common-looking man, far better calculated to shine in the *chambre* than the *salon*. The conversation he addressed to me was so diluted to what he supposed the level of my understanding, that I would rather he had talked exclusively to his opposite neighbour, one of the greatest capitalists in France, to whom his discourse was of railroads—rail-roads—rail-roads; and the *gigantesque* of his views on this gigantic topic highly entertained me. The dinner was splendid, much like those of Merioneth House, with the exception that there was no fine buffet of family plate, and that the *dessus-de-table* or *plateau*, which occupies the whole length of a French dinner-table, was merely of *or-moulu* and crystal. The service was long, formal, and tiresome, every dish, even to the most trifling *hors d'œuvre*, being carefully served round in succession to the eighteen guests before the ceremony was concluded. Champagne was not introduced till dessert; yet its aid was not wanting, as in England, to enliven the party. Every body talked incessantly; nor did I once hear that ominous clatter of knives and forks, which has often betrayed to me the dulness of my own dinner-table. During dinner, a single glass of sherry, and weak Bourdeaux and water, seemed the

beverages in favour; at dessert, Champagne and Tokay. The French of the present day are singularly temperate; and a lady seen to drink a glass of pure wine, or a second glass of champagne, would be unkindly thought of. At the conclusion of dessert, we were handed by the gentlemen to the drawing-room, coffee having been already served; and in a few minutes the carriages of the ministers were announced, and the solemn affair was over. In my ignorance, I had not ordered my carriage till ten o'clock; but Madame Lemaître, perceiving my embarrassment, good-naturedly proposed that I should accompany her to her sister, Madame Fournier's, the wife of a rich *receveur-général*, who has music every Sunday evening. There I found the Grisi, the venerable Grasini, Tamburini, Rubini, and, above all, the great *maestro*, Rossini himself, the idol of all these financial people. The wittiness for which he was long celebrated is said, indeed, to be in some degree obscured by the excellence of their dinners and suppers; they have crammed him into dulness. Madame Fournier's music was exquisite; her society, I suspect, so-so. The women were over-dressed and affected; the men, "*des fashionables*," a bad imitation of English dandies, and decidedly the least admirable class of *la jeune France*. The ineffability of an Englishman of fashion, with his five, ten, fifteen, twenty thousand a-year,—his valets, and villas, and travelling-carriages, and hunting-boxes,—is comparatively a consistent folly. From Eton to Almack's he is pampered into the languid, supercilious inanity which dozes through a London season, after the labours of its moors, its Melton, and its steeple-chases. Not so these pseudo-"*fashionables*" of the Café Tortoni; with their two or three hundred per annum, *pour tout potage*, their lives must consist of an alternation of *luxe et indigence*. We know that their black satin fronts and collars were invented for economical purposes, and that they are miserably lodged and fed, to enable them to perform their daily lounge in the Bois de Boulogne on a tolerable horse, and secure a weekly *stalle* at the Opera. Their finery is a hollow affair.

January 1st.—This is no weather for sight-seeing; I have therefore deferred my visits to the wonders of the metropolis till a milder season; and being at Rome, am doing as Romans do. *Lé jour de l'an!*—three inches of snow and forty thousand people,—nay, I should think, twice as many,—in the streets. To-day everybody calls upon everybody; millions of visiting cards are dispersed by people who make it their business to undertake the circulation; and, for once in its life, all the world is generous. During the last week, the toy-shops of Giroux, *La Porte Chinoise*, and the Palais Royal, have presented a perpetual stream of customers; and it would be a curious task to compute the amount of money expended from Christmas to New-Year's day, in the purchase of sugar-plums and gew-gaws equally

useless. *N'importe!*—the whole city is in movement; no business—no care. Every face wears a smile, for the French possess beyond all people the art of disencumbering themselves at will of the troubles of life; they put aside their vexations for a day, as they would a hat or a cloak; while we English, labour as we will, find it impossible to pluck out *every* thorn from our sides on even the most exciting occasion: hence our care-worn aspect. Life sits heavily upon us; we are a grave, considering people, deeply impressed with our moral responsibilities.

2nd.—Last night the ministers, *corps diplomatique*, and public bodies, were received at court, *pour souhaiter la bonne année à leurs Majestés*. To night it has been *our* turn, and I had the satisfaction of seeing the state-rooms in full splendour. I can imagine nothing more regally royal. The grand staircase and *salle des maréchaux* dazzlingly white, and radiantly illuminated, are worth a whole parish of Pimlico palaces!

The receptions here are very differently managed from our drawing-rooms. The ladies attending are placed, as they happen to arrive, along the whole range of state apartments; the royal family, entering from the *petits apartemens*, address themselves in succession to each, pursuing the long line till they return again, hoarse and fatigued, to the point from whence they started. First appears the King, attended by his *état major*, preceded by the aide-de-camp in waiting, who names every lady to his Majesty. To each, the King addresses, with obsequious courtesy, some common-place remark, and passes on. Next comes the Queen, for whom the same ceremonial is observed by her lady of honour: after her, Madame Adelaide; then the two charming Princesses; lastly, the Dukes of Orleans and Nemours. You hear nothing but the iteration of the same *barren* phrases:—“I hope you not inconvenienced by the heat.”—“Have you been long in Paris?”—“Do you make a prolonged stay in France?” Towards myself, and those with whom the royal family are personally acquainted, a greater degree of familiarity is exhibited; but there is something of kindness, of *bienveillance* of *bonité*, in the demeanour of the Queen, imparting value to her most trifling compliments.

I accompanied Madame de Merinville to the reception, who pointed out with pride the representatives of many of the first houses in France; would I could have shown *her*, in return, a more desirable display of my country-people! In addition to the fifty or sixty who did us honour, there were several hundreds who could ground no pretensions to appear there upon previous presentation at our own court, and among them several decidedly and notoriously inadmissible. This arises from want of due importance being invested in the English ambassador. No English gentleman can be presented to the King, except by his ambassador; no English lady *ought* to obtain access to the Queen, unless under the sanction of her ambassador. At present, applications are made direct to the *dame*

d'honneur, and immediately granted. Invitations follow, and England becomes most unworthily represented at the court of the Tuilleries.

To procure access to the British Embassy, on the contrary, it is indispensable, to produce a sufficient letter of recommendation. Mine, which was from Lady Southam, secured me a kind reception, an immediate invitation to dinner, and a general one to the Friday evening parties.

French families, who have the *entrée*, maintain their privilege of coming uninvited whenever the ambassadress receives company; but very few Carlists visit the embassy; not from deficiency of regard or respect towards its occupants; but because they are apprehensive of meeting certain ministerial and political *notabilités*, with whom they do not choose to come in contact.

Next in importance is the *salon* of the Austrian Ambassadress, the personal friend of our own, and one of the most amiable and graceful women of the day.

3rd.—To-night I made my *début* in the circle of Madame de Bretonvilliers; and am still shivering at the recollection! The great gloomy court-yard in the Rue de Grenade, the dark damp stair-case, the stifling garlic-scented antechamber, the ill-lighted rooms, the formal assemblage, were not compensated by the vastness of the antiquated saloons, and that magniloquent nomenclature of the guests. No young people, the ladies scarcely even in *demie-toilette*, muffled in bonnets and shawls—and coldness and formality enough to have frozen a salamander. I was presented to several dutchesses whose titles are historical, and who, by their appearance, may have figured in the *Fronde*. But I suspect there was a vapour of the Tuilleries clinging to my garments, for they eyed me most contemptuously. We had two Boston tables and a “wisk;” *eau sucrée* and weak syrup and water were handed round by way of refreshment; the candles seemed to burn dim; the lofty saloon was as hazy as one of our great theatres in the month of November; a sensation of ague seemed creeping over me. Dinner invitations, from the Bretonvilliers, are as much out of the question as the table of his holiness. The people of his *cast* are *supposed* to dine, but the fact has never been proved to foreigners by ocular demonstration.

We are apt to fancy in England that every great French family has its Ude; whereas none but the ambassadors, ministers, or great bankers, affect to give dinners, or even keep a *chef*. There was only Rothschild, in all Paris, who could venture upon Carême!

Just returned from a brilliant ball *chez le ministre de _____*. These ministerial fêtes are considered far from select, but my eye is not yet sufficiently familiar with the surface of French society to detect the fault. The house, an official residence, was noble, and nobly lighted; the orchestra admirable; and the whole thing faultlessly arranged. A French ball-room presents

a more orderly aspect than ours. The ladies are seated side by side round the room, generally in a double row; and no gentleman would dream of usurping a place among them; the seats are occupied by the same persons throughout the evening; when they dance, a handkerchief or bouquet is left to engage the place. The room has, consequently, the appearance of being lined with beautiful women, who are led out to dance, then reconducted to their seats. There is no wandering up and down, no pushing to get in here or out there, as in an English party, whereon the demon of restlessness appears to have set his seal. Our ladies fair are, in fact, too fond of lounging about on the arms of men, to whom they are comparatively strangers, to stare at this beauty, laugh at that quiz, or ascertain, by the most insolent coolness of investigation, whether they like the looks of Lady A. or Lady B., sufficiently to be introduced to her. They seem to fancy themselves privileged in rudeness towards any one not exactly belonging to their own set,—to sneer—to elbow—to push aside. French women, on the contrary, are peculiarly courteous to strangers. If thrust against their intentions into a crowd, there is a coaxing tone in their merest "*Pardon, madame, mille pardons!*" which, if not sterling gold, is very pretty tinsel.

The men in society here take my fancy less than the women. The *very* young ones affect Anglomania, and talk of nothing but horses and *la chasse*, in a tone of affectation ridiculous to English ears. Still worse are the *jeunes élégans*, the look-and-die class, who dress à *la moyen age*, and, like other mites, are vast underminers—of female reputation. I omit a few charming old men of the old school, all urbanity and good-breeding; but after a time their flowery nothingness becomes tedious; and, on the whole, the most agreeable companions are the men of about fifty, whose youth was passed at the imperial court, where ability was the *passe partout*; "men of the world, who know the world like men." From one thing, at least, you are secure in French society—the proud, reserved, unsocial, "superior man," so often met with in England—a miser of his own mind, who stalks through life as if he owed no kindly reciprocation of sociability to his fellow creatures. The French seem to have their temper or their temperament more under their own controul than the English.

—Just returned from a ball at the Tuilleries!—what a singular scene!—truly and indeed the *féte* of a *roi citoyen*—one of the few moral traces yet remaining of the July Revolution; a ball of four thousand persons, two thousand of whom are chosen from the middle, or somewhat below the middle, classes. Such an assemblage necessarily excites the disgust of the escutcheoned magnates of the feudal party; for the worsted epaulets of the National Guard are to their disdainful eyes as the sign of the Beast. But for myself, who have no national pride to be wounded by the contact, I confess that an entertainment given

by the king, *not* to his court, but to his subjects, affords unmixed satisfaction. Prejudice apart, I distinguished nothing in the dress or deportment of the guests, differing from those of society in general. I never saw assembled a greater number of elegant or elegantly attired women; and as to the inconvenience complained of, the pressure of the crowd,—(no greater, by the way, than at some charityball at Almack's—Caledonian or Hibernian)—it was easily to be avoided by arriving early, and taking a seat for the evening in the *salle des maréchaux*, where their majesties and the court remain stationed till the announcement of supper. It is the custom of the fine to show themselves for an hour, and retire about eleven; but I declined accompanying Lady Sarah Andover's party home, and remained with Madame de Merinville to witness the supper spectacle, often described to me as unique in brilliancy.

The banquet is served in the *salle de spectacle*, on tables occupying the ground floor and the circle of the *balcon*—a military band and a host of spectators occupying the second tier of boxes.

The theatre is resplendently illuminated with innumerable chandeliers, and the supper served exclusively upon plate. But the peculiar brilliancy of the scene is attributable to the circumstance that not a single gentleman is allowed to enter till the ladies have risen from supper; and the tables are consequently ornamented by uninterrupted lines of gay and beautiful women, glittering with diamonds and adorned with the richest costumes. And this vast area of the *salle* appears to be waving with plumes, and variegated by flowers.

A place was reserved for me beside that of Madame de Merinville, at the central table, occupied by the royal family and the household. As the queen took her seat, the band struck up the inevitable *quatuor d'usage* from *Lucile*,—“*Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?*” and after supper, including hot soups, *entrées*, &c., served by four hundred domestics, half of whom are in full court-dress, the other half in the royal livery, the queen rose and returned to the ball-room, followed by the whole assemblage. Our re-entrance, by the way, was somewhat formidable, through an apparently interminable lane, extending from gallery to gallery, of brilliant uniforms and scrutinising faces, waiting to rush into the supper-room. Dancing was immediately resumed, but I retired with my little friend; my eyes absolutely dazzled by the bright illumination of the Tuilleries, and the glittering variety of uniforms, French, English, Russian, Austrian, Hungarian, Greek, Highland, Oriental, contributory to the splendours of a ball *chez le Roi Citoyen*. Let the exclusives say what they will, a *fête* attended by four thousand prosperous, happy-looking people, under the roof of a noble palace, cannot but leave a most agreeable impression on the mind.

Thursday.—Loitered away an evening at the weekly *soirée* of an English exclusive of the secondary class, long resident here.

About twenty women, about thirty men, of divers nations, apparently *habitués* of the house, dropping in one after the other, to feast upon weak tea and equally vapid *causerie*.

None but the French can converse a whole evening without effort; the English (*du grand monde*) keep their attention alive only when whipped up by little serpent-scourges of ill-nature. The *soirée* of last night was the only one where I have heard a whisper of scandal; my countrywomen certainly possess a marvellous instinct for tearing each other to pieces.

"When an Italian is questioned concerning another Italian in a foreign country," said the Neapolitan Secretary of Legation to me, the other night, "he feels it a duty to make the best of his countryman. Unless he should labour under a serious stigma, we manage to say something courteous in his behalf. But, question one English lady concerning another, and you would suppose the whole nation to consist of lost women or vulgar *roturières*. It is either—I know nothing of her; she was never heard of in society in England!' or—'Pray do not talk to me of such a person; nothing can be more notorious than her conduct.' More diverting was the *naïvété* of the beautiful Marchesa, who exclaimed (on occasion of a tremendous storm excited some years ago in the English society of Rome, by the appearance of Lady * * * at the assemblies of the Hanoverian ambassador.) 'Their virtue! their virtue! How indelicate of these Englishwomen to be always talking about their virtue! We never heard such a thing alluded to, till the English came among us after the peace!"

To-night at Lady Harriet's, the King's ball was a target for the discharge of general impertinence.

"Were you at that thing at the Tuilleries, last night?" inquired a Carlist Dutchess of my friend Lady Sarah Andover.

"For an hour or two. I dined there on Sunday; so I thought it a good occasion to go and make my *visite de digestion*. By the bye, I did not see *you* in the *mélée*?" she continued, turning to our hostess.

"I do not happen to have a gown, just now, old and shabby enough to venture into a mob!" replied her ladyship. "I shall go to the private ball next week. Was there any thing amusing last night?"

"Less amusing than usual. On account of this political *démêlé*, we had no Americans. I do so dote upon the Yankees at those balls, whisking through the waltz with their Bourguignon diamonds, and their comet-like birds of paradise! One night last winter, I had the courage to stay supper; and before me there was a dish of beef-steaks and fried potatos, perfectly horrific to a Parisian *élégante* sitting near me (who, I found afterwards, was the wife of a glove-maker, in the Rue de la Paix.) 'Que voulez vous, ma chère?' said her companion. 'C'est pour les dames Anglaises. Les Anglaises, voyez vous, ne souhaitent souper sans biftek.'"

"We had no Americans, then, at the ball last night?" said I, addressing my friend Lady Poyntz, the wife of a Tory ex-minister.

"What ball?" she inquired, rousing herself from a reverie.
"At the Tuilleries."

"Was there a ball at the Tuilleries?"

"Yes, a splendid one."

"I know nothing about Louis Philippe's entertainments. I have not been at the Tuilleries these six years."

"You were fortunate," said I, "that the noise of such a multitude of carriages passing under your windows in the Rue de Rivoli, did not reveal the secret to you."

I begin to feel myself unworthy of the select *comites* of Paris society, such as Lady Harriet's. I am told they are the only ones in the civilized world, where what deserves to be called conversation still exists; yet I never heard any thing more vapid than the eternal repetition of—"votre sante a ete bonne depuis que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous voir?—Votre charmante amie, miladi (une telle,) &c., porte bien?—Comment avez vous trouve la Grisi hier au soir?—&c., &c." By way of conversational society, give me a first-rate English dinner party, or a pleasant party in an English country house! But, by way of gaiety, let me have a brilliant ball of several hundred persons, with good music, where every one talks to every one as much or as little as they please. I detest a *petit comite* of languid ineffables.

It is thought highly indecorous in Paris to sit conversing above a certain time with the same person. Every gentleman addresses in turn every lady of his acquaintance; and even, where a *liaison* actually and notoriously subsists, it would be considered an insult to society to render it publicly observable by undue attentions. Married couples living, however unhappily, together, appear so far together in public, that the *mari* escorts Madame into the ball-room, and back to her carriage. It is unnecessary to address each other in the course of the evening; still less to parade together, arm-in-arm, after the Darby-and-Joan custom of the English. *They* appear in society to pay their compliments to the world; their compliments to each other are supposed to be paid at home. The domestic virtues of the Parisians are at a low ebb. But this is studiously concealed. No people can be more attentive to the external decencies of life.

Chez nous, a woman giddily inclined chooses the most public places to exhibit her indiscretions;—the park, the Opera, Almack's, Kensington Gardens;—she seems to think it a pity that the influence of her bad example should be lost. This arises from the fact that Englishmen do not err deliberately, but become entangled in mischief from weakness and self-reliance. The Frenchman goes seriously to work, and is therefore studious not to provoke observation.

"I hear great mention, among you English ladies, of the word *"flirtation,"* said an old French gentleman de l'ancien re-

gime to me the other day. "I am often told,—'such a lady is perfectly well-conducted, but she is fond of a little innocent flirtation;' *Qu est-ce que ça veut dire*—'flirtation?'"

The Anglicism was somewhat difficult to explain; but, when I had wasted some eloquence on the attempt, he replied—“*Ah! vous voulez faire entendre de la coquetterie sans resultat?*”—a sort of thing to us incomprehensible!—In affairs of love, we are matter of fact. Our marriages are seldom, as in your country, marriages of inclination; yet we can boast an infinite number of virtuous and faithful wives. But a woman is either faithful to her husband, or takes a lover. *Il faut opter.* If the latter, she is doubly careful to give no umbrage to her husband by levity of demeanour. If, after being faithless to her husband, she becomes faithless to her lover, she is regarded in society as a *femme galante*, and ceases to be respectable. Pardon me, I speak plainly; but my position as a grandfather entitles me to explain these things to a stranger.”

And thus their code of immorality seems to be deliberately established; partly, I imagine, in consequence of the impossibility of divorce, and partly because, in case of *convicted* unchastity, a lady is liable in France to imprisonment, and is made to contribute from her own means towards the support of the children she has abandoned.

“You are so strange,—*you insulaires!*” cried my Baden friend, Madame de Nivelles, when discussing with me some point of morality. “You are fond of holding forth as if all the virtue in the world had taken refuge in Great Britain. But look at the fact!—look at the records of your newspapers!—look at your divorce trials.”

“Three or four instances in the year,” said I, “out of a population of seven millions, and vulgarly blazoned forth to the utter demoralization of the public.”

“*N’importe!*” she interrupted. “All that is thus recorded is *fact!* A miladi rushes from the arms of one milor into those of another; number 2 paying a large fine (according to legal tariff) to number 1. The miladi has only to change her name, her liveries, the arms on her carriage, and add a ball more or less to the coronet in the corner of her pocket handerchief;—and, *Vive la divorce!* all goes on as before.”

“Pardon me,” I exclaimed,—“such a woman has forfeited caste at once and for ever!—She is no longer received either at court or in society.”

“Bah, bah!—not in *London* society. But she comes abroad. She is the lawful wife of milor, and, except to the fêtes of your Ambassadors, is entitled to go every where. She has France, Italy, Germany, at her disposal; *que voulez-vous?* I have seen half a dozen of your *divorcées* in the best company; but, with *us*, a woman once driven in shame from her husband’s house is received into no other.”

— Interrupted by letters from England, Welcome interruption!—That most unamiable being, Sir Robert Herbert, has died suddenly, and Herbert and Armine come into the family estate and twelve thousand a year!—If ever woman merited prosperity it is my good unselfish sister;—she will know how to enjoy and improve the honours of affluence.—They will now quit Bedfordshire and settle in our beloved old neighbourhood!—With them, I shall return to the haunts of my youth,—the silver Trent,—and Needwood!—I had already determined not to visit London this season, I shall have had enough of dissipation before I quit Paris; but Armine invites me to see them early in the summer, and the invitation is, I own, a tempting one.

— To-day, for the first time, a *séance* in the *Chambre des Députés*. A ticket for the diplomatic tribune insured me somewhat more agreeable accommodation than in the old ventilator. As for the performances of the day, with my best endeavours to regard the affair with becoming gravity, I could not avoid being struck by a thousand absurdities. The hall is in itself dignified and senatorial. But the President with his little muffin-bell,—the rostrum, to which, in any sudden emergency of interest, the members cling like a swarm of bees to fight for possession;—above all, the total inattention of the Chamber to the ordinary run of speakers, amazed my weak mind. The French are the worst listeners in the world; fifty little vehement debates are perpetually carrying on among the benches of the two parties to which the Speaker on his legs does not belong. They lend their ears only to those of their own way of thinking; the right side and centre have no ears for the eloquence of the *côté gauche*. This is certainly one way of preserving consistency of opinion.

Then, their excess of vehemence, without the slightest appearance of being in earnest! In the English House, how little demonstration of fervour, but how convincing a tone of sincerity! *Here* they speak out of the abundance of the heart; *there*, out of its depths. Ever and anon, when the fifty little contingent parliaments grew too insolently noisy, dingle-dangle-ding went the little bell of Monsieur le Président, and order was for a few minutes restored. I came away weary and unexcited, before the *séance* was half over, feeling as if I had been in the presence of a disputatious academy, rather than of the legislature of the nation. I fancied,—no doubt it was fancy,—that I could discern a peculiar distinction between the characteristics of the deputies from the south, and those of northern France. Thiers appears, in spite of his bad delivery, to be a ready and adroit ministerial speaker; but in the tribune, as elsewhere, he cannot divest himself of his *air gamин*.

What does Henry Bulwer mean by the assertion that litera-

ry men are more eagerly welcomed in society here than in England? They occupy, perhaps, a more independent and honourable position,—are less exposed to being lionized by patronizing dowagers, and more sure of obtaining public preferment; but, with the exception of Mignet and Mérimée, who are courted for their personal merits and official standing, rather than for their literary distinctions, I have scarcely met one of them. To the parties of the ministers, of the *Grand Référendaire*, and other public functionaries, artists and men of letters are admitted, as part of a political system; but they are not to be found, like Moore, Rogers, Chantry, Newton, and others, in the boudoirs of the élite, or the select fêtes of a Devonshire House.

The calling of *un homme-de-lettres* is here, however, a profession, bearing its own rewards and profits, and forming an especial and independent class. In common with the artists, they look to ennoblement in the Academy, and, under the existing order of things, have been richly endowed with places and pensions; but among themselves, in their domestic privacy, their habits of life are on the whole inferior in refinement to those of the literary classes of England. It is true that, of late years, literature has been cultivated among ourselves as one of the highest graces of the aristocracy; while a considerable number of the ornaments of our schools of learning, devoting themselves to the church, attain high clerical preferment. In England, a great historian or moral philosopher achieves the golden honours of lawn sleeves; while, in France, he obtains an *habit brodé à croix d'honneur*, a pension, and the honours of the Academy. The Carlists possess Chateaubriand and De Vigny among the literati; but the venerable Celadon of Madame Recamier owes his importance in their eyes rather to his political distinction than to the authorship of "*Atala*." Lamartine's fame, as a first-rate poet, has been injured by his decadence into a second-rate senator. Victor Hugo is a harsh, dry, self-concentrated man, inflated into bombast by the worship of the romantic school. Balzac is the only Frenchman of talent who condescends to lionize in fashionable society: and, of female writers, though several might be cited as accomplished and elegant, the French have nothing comparable in importance with an Edgworth, a Martineau, a Joanna Baillie, or a Mitford. One woman of genius, the female Byron of *la jeune France*, must not be passed over in silence; but, luckily for the honor of her sex, Madame Dudevant is so ashamed of herself and her works, as to mask them under the assumed appellation of "*Georges Sand*." I noticed the profile of this talented woman in the collection of eminent persons among the medals of David: the eyes and forehead are strikingly handsome—the mouth *animalâtre* and coarse—half a Ciroe—half a muse.

— I have lately been trying to investigate the nature of the charm which renders Paris so favourite a sojourn of the English: In point of gaiety, (for gaiety, reading dissipation,) it affords nothing comparable with that of London. A few ministerial fêtes every winter, may perhaps exceed in brilliancy the balls given in our common routine of things; but, for *one* entertainment at Paris, at least thirty take place *chez nous*. Society is established with us on a wider and more splendid scale. The weekly *soirées*, on the other hand, which properly represent the society of this place, are dull, meagre, and formal to the last degree of formality. There is no brilliant *point de réunion* such as Almack's; no theatre, uniting like our Italian Opera, the charm of the best company, the best music, and the best dancing. Of the thousand and one theatres boasted by the Parisians, only three are of a nature to be frequented by people of consideration; the remainder being as much out of question as the Pavilion or the Garrick. Dinner parties there are none; water parties, none; *dejeuners*, unless given by a foreign ambassadress, none. A thousand accessories to London amusements are here wholly wanting. In the month of May, I am told, the public gardens and the Bois de Boulogne become enchanting. But what is *not* charming in the month of May? Paris, perhaps, least of all places; for, at the commencement of the month, every French family of note quits the metropolis for its country-seat, or for sea or mineral bathing. Foreigners, and the mercantile and ministerial classes alone remain. *La finance et la bureaucratie! triste ressource!*

What, then, I would fain discover, constitutes the peculiar merit of inducing persons, uninstructed by motives of economy, to fix themselves in this comfortless and filthy city, and call it Paradise? Alas! my solution of the problem is far from honourable to the taste of our absentees! *In Paris people are far less amenable than in London to the tribunal of public opinion!*

The custom of living in suites of apartments, either in a public hotel or a furnished house, renders people independent of the *surveillance* of their servants and of each other. Among the well-regulated establishments of a good street in the better quarters of London, every action, every gesture, every visit received or refused, is known and commented upon, not only by your next door neighbour, but by the super-abounding, and therefore idle, servants of a dozen others. The lazy butler of No. 36, yawning on the door-steps during the daily drive of his lady, and comparing notes with his brother corkscrews of No. 35 and 37, has nothing better to do than communicate intelligence of my lady's flirtations, or my lord's unpaid bills, to be circulated round the neighbourhood. In Paris he would be dusting chairs or washing china; for not a hand that is not superabundantly tasked is retained in a French establishment.

Personal allusions, moreover, are inadmissible into the newspapers. No vulgar appetite prevails for learning the number of guests or *entries* at the dinner of the Marquis of This or Baron of the Other—the fiddle-faddle particulars of ladies' toiletts, or the comings and goings of the aristocracy, and aristocracy-aping mediocracy. There is infinitely less of the servile spirit of lackeyism among the middling and lower orders. A French haberdasher knows what the journals of the day relate as the last firman of the grand signor, but cares not a rush whether the noble duke, lodged in the first floor over his shop, is married or single, or about to commit matrimony; while a French footman talks to the *frotteur*, dry-rubbing your apartments, of the order of the day in the Chamber, or the pictures at the Exposition, instead of the improprieties he may have noticed while lounging away the night in the hall at Willis's.

Even in the most frivolous society, conversation rarely takes a personal tone. Scandalous gossip is regarded as eminently vulgar. The men talk politics—the women, dress—seldom or ever, the affairs of their neighbours. Whether public morals derive improvement from this security from that minor, yet influential public tribunal—the voice of society—may perhaps be doubtful; but it is certain that not a few of the English are well content to be emancipated from the *obligato* suit of buckram worn in London, and the hypocrisy induced by the consciousness of being always under review—always perched upon a judgment-stool—always subjected to the scrutiny of the steward's room, the servants' hall, the malignancies of the fashionable school for scandal, and the branding-irons of the weekly press! Peerages, baronetages, magazines, annual registers, render the United Kingdom familiar with the births, deaths, and marriages—the divorces and delinquencies—nay, even the balls and masquerades, of the privileged classes of our own country. In France, each lives secure from observation in his hotel, as a marmot in his burrow, till some escutcheoned hearse, ascending to the heights of *Père la Chaise*, proclaims to the cobler, who for thirty years has mended shoes as porter to the mansion adjoining that of the defunct, that *sa seigneurie*, his neighbour, is no more! I should have known nothing of the misadventures of the Gresham Ronshams, had we lived side by side in the Rue de l'Université, where things are established on too vast a scale for neighbourly espionage; nor would Fieschi have been enabled to build up his atrocious battery unobserved, in a lodging-house in Piccadilly.

Just received a charming letter from Herbert, enforcing with every possible argument his wife's invitations for the summer. "I am persuaded," he writes, "that what may have appeared to you a morose, unkindly humour on *my* part,

has tended to create estrangement between us. Of this, believe me, my dear Harriet, you will have no further cause for complaint. You, who have perhaps experienced all the vexations of life, saving the sting of that gnawing worm called poverty, are wholly unable to appreciate the wear and tear of temper produced by the petty mortifications it induces. You cannot figure to yourself the humiliation of a man united to the wife of his choice, the object of his idolatry; and compelled, instead of surrounding her with the luxuries and elegancies of life, to preach a thrifty economy, and mingle in the endearments of their privacy arguments upon the waste of the kitchen, or the gluttony of the servants' hall. To have fair and promising children born to you, and know their prospects insecure,—even their means of education circumscribed—is a bitter trial. You have seen me smarting under such feelings—smarting under unavowed embarrassments hateful to a man of honourable principles; but you will see all this no more. Our golden age is begun. Henceforward no quietudes but those inseparable from the common lot of humanity—no heartburnings—no bickerings—no impatience. My dear unexacting Armine will henceforward occupy the position I have desired for her since the moment when, in early girlhood, she became the object of my preference. Come to us, my dear Harriet, and witness all this. Dread no more lectures; I shall be too busy inculcating lessons of happiness, to trouble myself with lessons of wisdom."

This is indeed a cheering prospect, not for my projected visits, which remain among things Utopian, but for my dear sister, the best, because the least selfish, of human creatures. And of my own *avenir*? Alas! I do not yet venture on anticipations. Let me first thoroughly recover my self-possession; let the wounds of my pride be thoroughly cicatrised; and then, new prospects and new resolutions!

Revenons à nos papillons. It is edifying to perceive with regard to Carliem, as with regard to all other extremes of bigotry, that affection and prejudice have begotten their own punishment. The French are not intrinsically a loyal nation. Their royalism is not the illustration of a scriptural precept, "Fear God—honour the king," for they adore Mary Mother rather than their Maker, and honour Versailles and the Tuilleries rather than the Father of the People. They love the pomp and glitter of the throne; cling to the abdicated dynasty rather as an evidence of *bon ton* than from any better motive, choosing it to be supposed that their ancestors were courtiers of the elder Bourbons, and that gratitude necessitates their faithful adherence to the race. Hence, an infinite number of ancestorless pretenders assume the name of Carlists as a warranty of their equivocal nobility. Men whose fortunes were amassed during the pillage of the first revolution, or by

speculations prospering under the empire, nay deriving their revenues from the profits of public gaming-tables affect allegiance to the cause of legitimacy, as a plea for improving their circle of society by making their houses a point of reunion for the Carlist party, most of whom are too poor, and many too timid, to render their hospitality a rallying point for the seditious. Several distinguished circles have been formed by obscure and worse than obscure individuals, under such auspices. Even a low-bred American, accidentally enriched, has bought his way to prominence by permitting certain Carlist dignitaries to entertain their friends at his expense. Among the first to overwhelm this rash Timon of a new Athens with ridicule, are the parties so largely indebted to his weakness. "What would you have?" they exclaim; "it would expose us to the persecutions of the police were we to unite under our roofs the distinguished members of our party. These obscure people are liable to no such interpretation. Monsieur Persil would find it difficult to promote a Yankee democrat into an emissary of the legitimate party. Under such auspices we are safe!"

After all, this is but a modification of the acquaintance-brokerage I formerly stigmatized in London. *A chacun, ses travers!*

There exists, by the way, in Paris, but a single fashionable club, which having been founded at the period of the Restoration, is composed in a great measure of Carlists, systematically illiberal towards the English. At this, as in the best London clubs, high whist is the order of the day, enhanced by the attractions of good society and a good *cuisine*. Such a resort is of course unfailing in attraction to *Messieurs les Anglais*, on the model of whose tables it was created by the returned emigrants of 1814; and it seems at least to relieve society from the presence of inveterate whist players, a tiresome and profitless restraint.

— Were not my Dairy secured under one of the choicest of Bramah's patent locks, I would not hazard a word on dress and fashion, since all comment on such a subject must be to the disparagement of my own country. For Paris is beyond question the Mecca of the *toilette*, and Herbault the high-priest of the Temple—Herbault, who "purveys (wo) mankind from China to Peru," civilizes the empresses of barbarous Muscovy, and regalizes even the obesity of a Queen Christina. This illustrious artist is said to have been born in the palace of Versailles, when Versailles was a royal residence; though, during the gorgeous triumphs of the empire, his star shone subdued by the brilliancy of that of *Le Roi* ("le roi des modes,") to rise at last in utmost glory with the sun of the Bourbons. To his genius, the Court of Lewis XVIII. and his successor was indebted for half its attrac-

tions; nor would the tears of *le petit Château* have ever ceased to flow for the loss of Madame, had not Louis Philippe, by a master-stroke of genius, retained Herbault the unique, as milliner of the new Court of the new Queen. The day preceding every royal gala is passed by Herbault *au Château*, arranging the diamonds of her Majesty and the Princesses on their dresses, and imprinting on the very hem of their garments the impress of pure legitimacy—for the mighty master is a zealous devotee of courtliness. No one so nicely discriminates between "*l'air comme il faut*," "*l'air distingué*," "*l'air noble*," "*un port de reine*," and "*une pose impériale*"; no one so scrupulously avoids giving to the *toque* of a *femme de la banque* the turn of feather becoming the Ambassador of Imperial Austria. He is M. A. or rather L. L. D. in the *arcana* of the toilet, a man of science as well as a man of genius. Hear him discuss the comparative qualities of the ostrich of Syria, the ostrich of Senegal, the ostrich of the Cape,—and old Pennant the ornithologist is outdone. No wonder that Dantan should have immortalised Herbault the First and Last by one of the cleverest of his *statuettes*!

Herbault and Victorine are, however, the only remaining classicists of the School of Fashion. All that Hugo and Dumas have done towards the corruption of literature, has been effected in the reign of *la mode* by Palmyre, Beaudrant, and their imitators. Exaggerations have crept in under the sanction of these people; and were it not for the tone of absolutism with which Herbault maintains his ascendancy over the wavering minds of his *belle clientalle*, chaos would come again, and a renewal of the monstrosities of the *incroyables* betray the innovations upon moral order, inevitable in the divided kingdom of a citizen King. Long live Herbault! Whatsoever King may reign, let the legitimacy of the toilet remain unpolluted!

In no country in Europe is the infallibility of the Head of the Fashion so important as in France. England is a land of originals; and in dress, as in all other matters, people consult their whims and fancies. A Frenchwoman's sole fancy is to follow the fashion,—*the fashion*, for it is one and indivisible. Herbault fixes the "mould of form" for summer bonnets at the Easter promenade of Longchamps; and, thenceforward, to attempt any other shape, would be flat blasphemy. A world of trouble and invention is spared. From the exclusive down to the humblest *grisette*, the rule is made absolute. In France it would be as vulgar to affect a deviation from the general law, as in England tamely to submit.

I am at a loss, however, to determine what constitutes the undeniable superiority of a Frenchwoman in the art of the toilet; unless, as I suspect, it consists in excessive neatness. Every point of her costume is exact and precise. However

simple the materials, the dress fits to a miracle. Not a plait is out of its place, not a rumple discernible: the glove, the shoe, the stocking, all are equally well fitting;—every hair of the coiffure is carefully adjusted, and the quilling of the snow-white cap scrupulously symmetrical. You never find, as in the case of a showily-dressed Englishwoman, a superfluous bow of ribbon stuck on to cover the fissure of an ill-fitted waist; or a fine chain or broach assumed to smarten up a dress whose freshness is tarnished; while crushed flowers or soiled ribbons are sins beyond forgiveness. Frenchwomen are careful of their belongings, and, possessing scarcely a fourth part of the finery with which we overload our wardrobe, are always fresh and spotless.

It is no discredit to *them* to be seen at half-a-dozen successive balls in the same gown; and they are, consequently, secure from the vexation of appearing in it in successive seasons. This prudent limitation enables them to be always in the fashion.

It is the custom of the lower orders in England to exclaim, when a woman is rouged to excess, or attired in glaring colours,—“look at that *Frenchified* piece of goods!” Of the sins of the Parisian belles of former days I sing not; but, at present, nothing can exceed the modesty of fashionable costume. Except at balls, an *élégante* never appears in full dress; and her *demi-toilette* and morning dress are remarkable only for a deficiency of ornament. The only women I have noticed here as wearing rouge are countrywomen of my own; nor was I ever before aware of the meretricious and most unlovely aspect imparted by false colours to even the loveliest countenance. I speak not in a moral sense; for whether a woman waste three or four hours in adjusting the niceness of her dress and the brightness of her hair, or, after a hasty toilet, apply a coat of rouge upon her cheek, the impulse of coquetry must be the same. But paint is a positive defeature;—it imparts a glassy look to the eyes and a doll-like vulgarity to the face. If the catalogues of the perfumer’s shops of Paris are to be credited with their enumeration of *crème de concombres*, and *crème de limagons*, cosmetics are as much in use here as among the London votaries of Kalydor and Macassar oil;—but at least the sin of the whitened wall is wanting.

—I went to night through the ceremony of what is called a *visite de digestion*, at the weekly *soirée* or *réception* of the *Ministre de —*. What a penalty is entailed by this custom of opening your house weekly, to afford to all and sundry who can pretend, in the most remote degree, to the honours of acquaintance or official collision, an opportunity of intruding uninvited into your society! The ministerial *soirées* include of necessity so unsatisfactory an assemblage, that the visits of those persons whose presence would be really acceptable,

are rare and brief; while people sufficiently small to find their consequence augmented by being seen under a ministerial roof, omit not a single occasion of courting a formal bow from *l'homme en place*. There were about a dozen ladies to-night, most of them wives of leading deputies or other *spécialités*, and nearly three hundred men. No refreshments—nothing but talkee-talkee—adorned by that flourishing arabesque of compliment which overruns the discourse of these silver-tongued iron-hearted people. I observed a vast number of artists and men of letters; not holding, however, the dignified attitude assigned them in such society as that of Lansdowne House, the *pendant* to that assembled *chéz monsieur le ministre*. I doubt, by the way, whether, if the custom of voluntary evening visits were admitted in London, such parties would present the orderly tone and aspect they retain in Paris. Manners predominate here over morals; and even Robert Macaire in his rags knows how to present himself in society.

A distinguished doctrinaire deputy amused himself by upbraiding me this evening with the delinquencies of Mrs. Trollope and her book on Paris.

"I cannot but conclude," said he, "that the fame of this new work, as well as of that on America, is based on the cleverness of Hervieu's sketches; for I find that those the Trollope has published unillustrated, are admitted to be failures. *Rien de plus amusant que de voir à quel point cette pauvre vieille a été coiffée de son Abbaye aux Bois, et entichée de sa coterie de sempiternelles; une petite demie-douzaine d'hommes, célèbres par leurs réputations, et autant de femmes, célèbres par leurs manque de réputation*—dont l'une a quatre fois divorcé, et les autres se sont dispensées de cette cérémonie:—voilà la prétresse de son culte immaculé! *D'honneur, votre Madame Trollope est impayable!*"

"Il parait qu'elle veut se faire donner pour une femme de bonne compagnie!" cried another; "cependant son guignon contre l'Amérique se rapporte à la banqueroute d'un certain bazaar, dont elle était l'entrepreneuse!—Qu'un pariel individu se mêle critiquer les mœurs,—de juger les usages!—L'impertinent!"

What would they say of me, did they know that I also am guilty of the presumption of playing the critic, though not for the edification of the public?

One of the recreations brought into vogue here by foreigners (chiefly by the English,) consists in *des dîners de cabaret*, as they are qualified, after the fashion of the *régence*. It is true, that among the middling classes, a third of the population dine habitually at the *restaurants*; but even the fine ladies have been allured to the Rocher de Cancale, by the dinners of *soixante francs la tête*, given by Lord Hartford and other travelling *Amphytrions*. Yesterday I was present at one of

these dinners; the mere *cuisine* of which is rivalled only by three or four private houses in London. The service was admirably good, for *restaurant*—but deficient, of course, in the refinements and comforts of a private house. The fish course, which established the fame of the Rocher, struck me as far inferior to that of Lovegrove; but I was informed by Mr. de Rawdon, an English attaché versed in such matters, that the wine, here, is no less preeminent. After all, there is something objectionable in the idea of elegant women quitting their decent homes, and visiting an eating-house in one of the dirtiest parts of Paris, for the sake of a few well-dressed dishes; and as for the buffet of undressed fish, which it is part of the entertainment to visit, Grove's shop and Phillips', during the London season, are fifty times better provided. The only reasonable plea in favour of the system is, that such dinners are usually given by fashionable bachelors, diplomatists, or dandies, having no establishment of their own.

From the dinner-table yesterday, we proceeded straight to the opera, and the evening passed off agreeably enough, with the exception that little Alfred de la Vauguyon made his attentions so disagreeably apparent, that for the future I shall decline the honour of his visits.

The French bid bold defiance to Shakspeare's axiom, that

“Marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt with by attorneyship,”

matrimony being with them as much an “*affaire*” as any transacted at the Bourse. Madame de Bretonvilliers, who visited me to day, accounted for being in higher spirits than usual, by informing me that she had just arranged a charming marriage for her niece Malvina de Rochmore, with the young Prince of Aspern.

“Is Mademoiselle de Rochmore much attached to the prince?” said I, with perfect naïveté.

“Attached? *Quelle horreur!*” cried the Marchioness. “With *us* a young lady presuming to entertain a passion would be considered lost. Malvina has never seen the Prince. She is still at the convent of the *Sacré Cœur*; and her father, the Duke, being a widower, it is at *my* house the wedding will take place.”

“And the *courtship*?” said I.

“Courtships, *chez nous*, are very differently managed from those of your country. Malvina arrives at *my* house to-morrow; and henceforward the Prince will present himself there every evening, among the rest of my visitors. At the end of a week or ten days I shall interrogate my niece. Should there exist no repugnance on her side, (which is scarcely possible,

for Aspern is very amiable, *et de très bons façons*, and being unacquainted with any other man, no previous impression can have been made) the arrangements will proceed. As her avowed fiancé every evening the Prince will present Malvina with a bouquet; and before the end of the month, the *signature du contrat* will take place,—a ceremony to which I have the honour of inviting you; immediately afterwards, the wedding, the *dînners de famille*; and I shall have the happiness of beholding my niece settled in one of the finest hotels in Paris, immediately adjoining my own."

"But should Mademoiselle de Rochmore admit a feeling of repugnance?

"In that case, the negotiations, which are known only to ourselves, would be immediately broken off. But it is not likely. Malvina has been admirably brought up; she has a delicate and feeling mind, fully alive to the advantages of a match proposed for her by the tender foresight of her father, on whose judgment she has perfect reliance. You can scarcely imagine how much we French are revolted by the manners of English young ladies, who go rambling in ball-rooms, flirting (as they call it) with this man, and laughing familiarly with that; refusing or accepting proposals, and at length, informing their parents that their affections, or even their hands, are engaged."

"Remember," said I, "that these proceedings take place under the observation and sanction of their parents, who are on the spot to interfere should any objectionable acquaintance arise."

"But what man of sense," said the Marchioness, "would seek a wife in one who for years has been on the look out for lovers and a husband, and, before she makes her election, must have passed through the preliminaries of half-a-dozen courtships!—Shocking!—Horrible!"

Instead of which," I retorted, piqued in my turn, "it is *after* marriage that you Parisians incur a similar peril. *Croyez-moi*, both systems are open to objection; and each is best adapted to the customs of the country in which it has arisen."

I did not admit to Madame de Bretonvilliers what I cannot disguise from myself, that my countrywomen have only too readily adopted the system of "attorneyship" in their matrimonial arrangements on the continent. In France no woman is too old, too ugly, too odious, to be beset by suitors, provided she possess *les écus*. The smallest fortune has its adorers; but a widow with a good jointure, or a *demoiselle* with a handsome *dot*, is sure to be the object of a thousand speculations. A woman who, for ten preceding years, had been consigned in London to the be bench of Dowagers, arrives in Paris to be courted as a partner in the ball-room, previously to being sought as a bride; and, the dormant spirit of

coquetry thus reawakened, these elderly dames are apt to play fantastic tricks before high heaven, and eventually become the prey of some adventurer. Unless where prudent relatives are at hand to examine into the pretensions of the aspirant, the assiduities of a French suitor ought to be very cautiously accepted. Those of Alfred de la Vauguyon are, I am aware, addressed solely to the *beaux yeux de ma cassette*; but so would it be were he to form a connexion with the most illustrious family in France; and, though not rich, his parchments thrown into the scale will probably secure him an alliance with some heiress of the financial class, whose gold *servira à dorer l'écusson nobilissime des Vauguyons.*

—A ball *chez le Duc d'Orléans?* I should be sorry, could any reasonable being be aware how anxious I felt for an invitation, which is considered here equivalent to a diploma of beauty. The handsome heir apparent desires, naturally enough, to have his *fétes* graced with the presence of all the pretty women in Paris; and the candidates are proportionably numerous. All honour, however, to his Royal Highness's discrimination!—the ball was perfect! The Duke's apartment which occupies a portion of the palace distinct from that of their Majesties, is furnished in the style of *la rénaissance*, with a choice selection from the royal *Garde Meuble*; and gleanings from all the curiosity shops in Paris. The Duke of Orleans has also a charming collection of paintings and sculpture, by modern artists, of whom he is the liberal patron. His tastes are elegant, and for a handsome young Prince of four-and-twenty, not more frivolous than might be expected, including one or two "eternal passions" in the course of every season, and the best racing stud in France. All this would sit better perhaps on an English lordling than on the heir apparent of so turbulent a monarchy as the citizen kingdom of France; for a "*jeune homme comme il faut*" is a "*jeune Prince comme ne il faut pas;*" but *his* is an heirship-apparent at best presumptive, and I fear apocryphal. *En attendant, vive Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans,* the best ball giver in Europe!

I agreed to accompany Madame de Mérinville and half a dozen other women of equally unimpeachable fashion, *en partie fine* to the *ball de l'opéra*, escorted by a sufficient number of cavaliers, prudently selected from among their fathers and uncles, to defy the breath of calumny. There was an affectation of mystery in the business, although our project was known to half our acquaintance; but, as Madame de Mérinville retained her box, we were sure of a retreat in case the ball should prove too crowded or too gay. I have been so long accustomed to connect the idea of a masked ball at the opera with the scandalous anecdotes of French memoirs, that I experienced a consciousness of having embarked in a silly adventure. As far, however, as my own observation enables

me to decide, good order and discretion prevail at the *bal de l'opéra* as much as in the church of St. Roch! Instead of being "pleasant, but wrong," the thing is dull and decorous. Men are only admitted unmasked, ladies in a close black domino, which, assimilating all shapes and ages, rendered us unrecognizable. A foot and hand, *bien chaussé*, et *bien ganté* form the sole distinction between belle and belle. My venerable escort, and uncle of my friend Madame de Mérinville, informed me that the propriety of the *bal de l'opéra* (which he was pleased to call its *décadence*) dates from the establishment of Musard's balls, which take place twice a week in the Faubourg St. Honoré, as a focus for the demoralization of the *beau monde* and *low monde*. There, even the fine gentleman appears masked and *en polisson*, and the results are such as to preclude the presence of even the least prudish woman of character. Such is the *égout* which is said to have purified the masked balls of the opera.

I proposed to Madame de Mérinville, at Lady Harriet Snipsnap's request, to include her Ladyship in our little party, and was not a little mortified to be refused.

"*Ne m'en voulez pas, ma chère*," said she, "*mais votre miladi est une femme aux aventures*. On this point, our Queen, like your own, is difficult. Miladi Harriette is not of our society at the *Château*, and it would not suit me to be seen at her house, or have her seen at mine. *D'ailleurs charmante femme*; but too much talked of."

After being compelled to convey this refusal—however cautiously worded, ungracious enough—I thought it right to attend Lady Harriet's next *soirée*, when, my attention being awakened on the subject, I certainly *did* notice that her *coterie* consisted of persons, like the articles displayed at some great china sale in London, damaged or defective; a family (or a tea set,) mis-matched by the unsatisfactory disappearance of a daughter (or a cream-ewer;) or an elderly roué (or vase) with the gilding worn off. There are, however, so few English houses of consideration open *à jour fixe* in Paris, that Lady Harriet's retains a certain vogue, particularly with certain persons desirous of meeting certain other persons, and uncertain of an elsewhere. To-night, to my great amazement, as I sat gossiping with Lady Harriet, who possesses the fluent glibness of discourse peculiar to one who has passed twenty years *en causeries*, in came the Duke of Mertoneth, arrived only this evening in Paris, and coming to note his arrival at Lady Harriet's Exchange, as a merchant might have done at Lloyd's. He appeared at once delighted to see me, and vexed to see me *there*.

The Duke has been passing the autumn at his place in Wales, surrounded by his own family, so that he could tell me nothing of those concerning whom I was most anxious to

hear. His inquiries of myself plainly proved that he has made himself acquainted with all my proceedings since I quitted England. He seemed as much *au fait* of every particular of my travels as my courier. The Duke's journey hither seems to have been a sudden movement, but he will be an addition to society. We have a variety of English personages in Paris this winter, all having their own orbits and pursuits, and contributing little to the general amusement. They have introduced the detestable custom of great dinners, which tire out one's spirits without pleasure or profit.

Pozzo di Borgo's house, by the way, is said to be a great loss to society; but I meet every night several striking Russian beauties, who are supposed to play the same parts in Paris which Alexander despatched one of the fairest of his court to enact at that of Napoleon. A still more captivating woman is one who might pass alternately for Russian, English, French, Italian, German, or Spanish; a perfect linguist, an accomplished artist, a clever musician, and, better than all, a pretty woman;—who sways the world of diplomatists and dandies, not with a rod of iron, but a rod of loadstone—nay, perhaps, a divining rod, for many believe there must be magic in her influence. An object of spite to her own sex, all the world, on arriving here, is put on its guard against her wiles, yet all the world entangles itself in the *piquante* Countess's net as blindly as if the warning had been spared.

I cannot, however, forgive any thing that is young and pretty for soiling its taper fingers with the dirty work of politics! Let our sex glory in the public triumphs of fathers, husbands, brothers, lovers; but the successes to be conquered by backstairs influence, the mole-like mining and countermining of petty intrigue, are a vile species of *contrebande*, and unworthy the purity of feminine nature.

I am assured that the animosities of politics have greatly abated during the last two years. Still, there are certain circles in Paris which greatly resemble the hustings of an English election; and when some new deserter sneaks over to the enemy, *i. e.* some Carlist beauty appears at one of the balls of the *Château*, fearful is the hue and cry raised after the delinquent. In vain does she plead the fruitlessness of resistance to the established order of things, the example of those older and wiser than herself, the necessity of opening a career for her husband and children; political partisans are animals which give tongue, but give no ear.

One of the grand secrets of this vehemence of political zeal is want of occupation. The education of such Frenchwomen as were born at the early period of the great Revolution, was of necessity neglected; and these *ignorantissimes*, who have now attained to middle age, having nothing learned and nothing forgotten, "throw themselves" into politics, just as for-

merly *elles se seriaient jetées dans la dévotion*. Some doting peer, or displaced *préfet*, occupies the post formerly assigned to the *Père directeur*, and their bigotry takes only a minor object for its idolatry. The uncultivated minds of such women are easily overmastered by a ruling passion which they mistake for a ruling principle; and happy those of the rising generation, who, if ungifted with faculties applicable to the highest purposes of study, are at least trained to devote their leisure hours to music, drawing, and *les arts d'agrément*, so as to secure them against the possession of that particularly evil spirit, the genius of political intrigue! I never yet saw a female saint, or a female politician, who had not taken up her vocation in the want of rational employment.

— The Duke of Merioneth left his name for me this morning; and to-night I met him *au concert à la cour*, to which I accompanied Madame de Mérinville. These concerts are admirably arranged; I never heard a better selection of music. The invitations are issued so as to distinguish the non-dancing part of the community, as far as the *petits bals* distinguish the dancers; but on the whole they are less exclusive than the private balls. This is the first appearance of the Duke of Merioneth at the court of Louis Philippe; and though a professed Liberal, I am convinced he was disturbed by compunctions visitings, at finding himself the guest of the successor of Charles X.; nay, I predict that during his stay here, he will mechanically re-enrol himself under the banners of the noble Faubourg. His Grace will be diverted by bearing of a conquest I have effected in that seventh-heaven of heraldry. Two evenings ago, just as I was dressed for Lady Harriet's, I received a visit of ceremony from Madame de Bretonvilliers, to tender matrimonial overtures for my hand (and jointure) in the name of her respectable uncle, the old Duc de Clisson, whose style and titles are said to engross the parchment of a whole patriarchal flock; but whose rent roll, *soit dit en passant*, would lie in a nutshell. The venerable Duke affects to find in me the tone of the *vieille cour*; declares that there was an inter-alliance between the houses of Clisson and Montressor, in the time of Philip Augustus; and protests that his *château* on the Durance, an old turreted barn, furnished to receive Maria de Medicis on her road from Tuscany to the arms of Henri IV., would be a paradise with such an *Ève* as Madame de Delaval for its Duchess of Clisson. Madame de Delaval knows better; and, without permitting the Marchioness to enter into financial particulars, or refer me, as she wished, for explanations to the *notaire* of the house of Clissons, I begged to decline the honour of the alliance. She seemed to think it would have been convenient to sign the marriage contract on the same day with that of Malvina Re Rochemore.

— This morning, being bright and sun-shiny, I have devoted to sight-seeing; to the churches of Notre Dame, so in-

terior to our own cathedrals of York and Lincoln; St. Eustache, an architectural whim, conceived in the worst taste, but producing an imposing effect; St. Etienne du Mont, the most ancient and beautiful of the religious temples of Paris; the ill-fated Panthéon, a type of the unsoundly-based but grandly designed modern monarchy of France; and, lastly, the Chapel of the Invalides, one of the noblest trophies of the *Siecle de Louis XIV*. As I admired its glorious nave, and the clever *ruse* by which its fine pavement was preserved from destruction during the Revolution, I could not but place myself in the position of General Serrurier, the Governor, who received the first visit of Napoleon on his return from Elba, when he beheld the eagle eye of his former benefactor raised to the empty space whence the banners, the trophies of ten years of victory, had been basely removed.

I visited last week the city of the dead—the cemetery of Père la Chaise; and, admitting all the charges made against it of bad taste and frivolous sentiment, could not stand unmoved in the burial-place of fifty thousand contemporaries, including so many illustrious names, so many memorable victims. Sepulchral monuments are liable, above all other works of art, to the hazard of that single but fatal step, from the sublime to the ridiculous, as our own churches of St. Paul and Westminster Abbey unfortunately demonstrate.—But, with the exception of Canova's monument at Vienna, to the memory of the Grand Duchess Maria Christiana of Luxe Teschen; Rauck's, to the Queen of Prussia; and Constan's, in the Cathedral of Sens, to the Dauphin and Dauphiness, the continent has nothing to show in rivalry with those of Mrs. Nightingale, in Westminster Abbey; of Mrs. Howard, at Corby; the Wodehouse children, at Lichfield; or Miss Johnes Knight, at Hasford.

The cemetery of Père la Chaise is, above all, strikingly deficient in monuments. The statue of General Foy, by David, is calculated for the senate-house rather than the sepulchre; and all the rest on which cost and care have been bestowed, consist in mausolea of granite, closed by solid gratings, containing marble altars adorned with massive plate. Of one stately burying-place (honourably mentioned by Madame Trollope) some curious anecdotes are recorded.—The Muscovite lord of the lady to whose remains it is dedicated, one of the richest individuals in Europe, directed, in the first outburst of conjugal grief, the purchase of a considerable piece of ground to be consecrated to her memory. Second thoughts, and the sculptor's estimate, arrived in process of time; and, instead of devoting the whole territory to its original destination, a reasonable space was allotted to the Countess, and the remainder to the construction of other graves. That these should be suffered to lie tenantless seemed absurd; and the Count, on receiving one day a visit from a

favourite protégé, an eminent French tragedian, who had been attached to his private theatre, presented with unexampled generosity to the astonished histrion the title-deeds of a vault in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, instead of the pension he had been fondly anticipating. Three other graves, however, remained to be disposed of; and one morning the beautiful Countess O——, who was dying by slow degrees of a cancer, was found by her physician bathed in tears. "I know I am getting rapidly worse," cried she,—"I know I look shockingly to-day. That monster — has been here, trying to persuade me to purchase one of his horrible *caueaux*!"—So much for the magnanimity of the magnificos of Muscovy!

Madame de Mérinville, after amusing me with this eventful history, favoured me with a still more scandalous anecdote connected with one of the favourite heroes of Madame Trollope. A lady fair, sometime since an object of idolatry to the celebrated bard so prominently bossed with the organ of veneration, was invited, a few summers ago, by her gentle shepherd to a *partie de campagne*,—an understood crisis in a French *affaire de cœur*. Attired in a bewitching *demie toilette*, the lady stepped into his *caleche*, anticipating a drive in the Bois de Boulogne, to conclude, probably, with a dinner at St. Cloud or Courbevoie; and after some hours passed in the open air, began perhaps to think with more complacency of *goujons frits*, or a *matelete Normande*, than of the tender but airy nothings poured into her ears. But the pilgrim of the valley of Jehoshaphat was otherwise disposed; and, instead of directing her steps towards the savoury salon of Legriel, guided her up the rough ascent of the Mont Valérien, and emphatically placed her hand upon the great iron cross of the Calvaire. "Jurez-moi sur cette croix une amitié éternelle!" whispered Monsieur le Vicomte to his fair companion; and thus ended the *promenade* of the *Génie du Christianisme* with his Atala; who found herself, on that occasion, like Monsieur Jourdain, considerably perplexed between poetry and prose.

At her soirée last night, poor Madame de Bretonvilliers commenced, in her usual tone, a violent Louis-Philippic, in which the terms *canaille* and *polisson* figured so far more freely than I thought becoming to exclusive lips, that I could not resist setting before her that however wide be the latitude of royal toleration with respect to society, the Carlist set had opened its trebly-guarded portals to persons, both English and American, rejected by the society of their own countries.

"You do not enter into our views," was her undaunted reply. "We meet at the hotels of the people to whom you allude, and they have the satisfaction to parade through apartments filled with the best company of the Faubourg; but they

belong no further to our society than would a tetotum twisted in the middle of the room. We scarcely know them by sight; they scarcely know us by name."

I would willingly have inveighed against the meanness that condescends to accept hospitality on such terms, but my conscience upbraided me with as great a sin, when I remembered the system of things prevailing in London. The only difference in the instance of the Turcarts being preyed upon by the Carlists, consists in the ridicule they have drawn upon themselves by their gorgeous and tasteless *parvenu*-ism—a ridicule which, in London, extending from *them* to *theirs*, would have isolated them into a species of fashionable quarantine. *Chez nous*, the false Amphitryon would have been laughed at as a vulgar pretender; *here* (*pourvu qu'on y dîne*) the impostor is accepted as a true man.

—Interrupted by a visit from the Duke of M, who, instead of admitting my usual plea to morning visitors, "*Madame n'est pas visible*," insisted upon both seeing me and being seen. I imagined he must have some urgent business—some party of pleasure to propose, or invitation to seek; but no—all his errand was to bestow upon me the tediousness of a rainy morning. He sat watching my tapestry frames in silence, and I was obliged to supply conversation as well as patience, for two. His Grace seemed gratified to find me so little captivated by Paris and its ways; but, fearing he might represent me on his return to England as one of those prejudiced Dame Trots who can find nothing to praise beyond the limit of the Straits of Dover, I began to seek out causes of commendation in the habits of the French.

"One meed of praise I cannot but concede them," said I. "The respect they show to age, and the indissoluble nature of their ties of family affection are certainly deserving of praise. In England, the word 'old woman' is synonymous with 'bore,' more especially if, in addition to the sin of years, she bring the crime of celibacy; here, it would be held an offence against good-breeding to show slight towards a woman of *any* time of life. I admit that the old women of Paris assume a more judicious position in society than among ourselves, where they totter to drawing-rooms and balls, to the discredit of their gray hair. After a certain epoch, a French woman is content to retire from the ball-room, *because* she is not fated, as in England, to retire into utter solitude. If a widow, she knows herself secure of an honourable station in the home of her married son or married daughter, or of the daily visits of her grandchildren and nieces. Every family of consideration is reunited once or twice a week—in many instances, *every* evening, before they disperse for the enjoyment of general society—when *la bonne maman* or *la bonne tante* is consulted, caressed, and honoured, instead of being com-

polled, by the slights of her own family, to court the impertinence of strangers."

"I believe," rejoined the Duke of M., "and am interested in believing, that the strongest instances of family affection are to be found in our own country; but example might be taken with advantage by many from the the *bienveillance* of the French. I admit that there are instances where the various members of families residing in London meet only as acquaintances in the common routine of society—nay, where married sisters and brothers seem to lose sight of their parents and each other—a circumstance unprecedented in France. Much of this family union of the French seems me to depend on the peremptory manner in which pecuniary interests are adjusted by the law, to the extinction of kinsmanly jealousy and parental favouritism, as well as on the authority exercised by families with regard to the marriages of their offspring. Should the signature of parents, or surviving parent be withheld from a marriage contract, the alliance cannot be legalized, unless by a legal process termed a *sommation respectueuse*, or summons to render an account of the property and objections of the family;—a measure rarely adopted, as it is supposed to stigmatize all parties concerned. On the other hand, I believe the family affection of the French to be of a more superficial character than ours. They meet daily, embrace constantly, and rarely indulge in domestic feuds; but they are never known to exhibit those strong examples of personal devotion, of personal sacrifice, which occur in England."

I immediately began to quote the thousand instances, beginning with that of the brothers Polignac, afforded in the course of the Revolution; but the Duke stopped me.

"You are talking of the French of the *ancien régime*," said he; "remember that a new moral code has since been instituted. The Parisians of 1789 are as different from those of 1830, as the English of Cromwell's time are from the courtiers of his dissolute successor."

Our didactics were interrupted by a visit from Mr. de Rawdon, with the sad intelligence that Lady Sarah Andover, whom I left three nights ago at a ball in perfect health and the highest spirits, was at the point of death! Though neither her friend nor intimate acquaintance, I am, indeed, shocked by such an event occurring at such a time. We have been running together the race of frivolity, and are, I fear, equally unprepared for so sudden a summons!

Terrible confirmation of Mr. de Rawdon's intelligence! Lady Sarah is no more;—without a relative,—without a friend to comfort her—she breathed her last. The giddy associates among whom she passed her time missed her, *scarcely* missed her, from the throng—enquired—heard from the porter of the hotel that miladi was "*indisposée*," and inquired no more. We had been the companions of her pleasures; it did not fellow

that we were to become the companions of her pains. She had been the life of our coteries; it did not follow that we were to assemble round her bed of sickness—*her bed of death!* Oh! hollow, heartless world! such, such might have been my own fate, wanderer as I am in a foreign country. By her own desire, her remains are to be removed to England; but for which request, they would have been already consigned to the dust—so eager is the haste with which the French thrust into the grave the encumbering object, the lifeless body, which obstructs the march of household business. This may result from the want of sympathy existing in a house of mourning inhabited by a dozen diverse families, ignorant of each other's names and qualities, and unwilling to interrupt their pleasures in token of respect to strangers; but it must be a cruel trial to survivors, to part so suddenly from all vestige of that which has been dear so long, and must be seen no more.

— I passed this evening at home, alone, for the first time since my arrival in Paris, deeply shocked by the recent event. But it would seem as if I had been forewarned to attach myself to my own fireside; for, as I sat musing over the precariousness of human life and human happiness, the Duke of Merioneth again made his appearance, on pretence of wishing to make me acquainted with the melancholy particulars of Lady Sarah's fate, but in truth on the formidable errand of asking me—to become his wife. It was impossible to make the proposal with more feeling or more delicacy. Few men have so much to offer with their hand as the Duke of M.—rank, wealth, and respectability; but, in all honesty, I thought only of the warm heart and honourable mind so fruitlessly devoted to me; and what with the surprise of the moment, and the shock received this morning, I could not restrain my tears at the notion of the mortification I was about to inflict in a decided rejection.

“ My self-love induces me to conclude,” he observed, after I had fully explained myself, “ that your affections are already engaged; but do not, I beseech you, imagine that I wish to pry into your secrets. Your preference cannot have been lightly accorded; may it tend to your eventual happiness!”

I hoped that, with this kind wish, he would take his leave; for, in reply to the observation, that had escaped him, it was as needless as it would have been impossible to utter a syllable; but, as I half rose from my chair to bid him farewell, he added, “ There was a time, indeed, when I fancied that Hartston, whose preference of yourself was visible to all the world was so fortunate as to have obtained a high place in your regard.”

“ On both which points,” I stammered, scarcely knowing what I said, “ the recent marriage of Lord Hartston must have undeceived you.”

“ Lord Hartston's marriage!” reiterated the Duke with a look

of unfeigned surprise. "I saw him in town the week preceding my departure. We talked on many subjects that would have rendered such a communication natural, yet he did not allude to the probability of any such event. Nay, I have every reason to believe—I have almost his own declarations for my authority—that marriage was never farther from his thoughts."

"You do indeed surprise me," cried I, startled beyond my self-possession; "and it may serve to prove how little I am interested in the movements of your friend, that till this moment, I believed him actually united to Lady Sophia Rossana."

"Lady Sophia Rossana has long been engaged to Hilton," observed the Duke.

"Yet, when I quitted England, the report of her approaching marriage with Lord Hartston was generally believed. From that period to this, I have made no inquiries on the subject, and concluded them to be actually married."

"I may therefore lay the flatteringunction to my soul, that Hartston had no share in my rejection?" said the Duke, half interrogatively, and intently regarding me.

"On such occasions," said I, evading his inquiring looks, "surely it is as useless as unsatisfactory to inquire into motives. That I have earnestly and sincerely requested the continuance of your friendship, is a sufficient attestation of the esteem with which you have inspired me."

"Enough!" cried he, now *really* approaching to take leave and, with a hurried gesture, raising my hand to his lips,—"I see you are willing to spare me unnecessary pain: you have been kinder to me than I am to myself." And in another minute he quitted the room. Alas! what a revolution had been effected in my views and feelings by the preceding hour!

The unjustifiable conduct held towards me by Hanton and Lord Penrhyn, may perhaps have tended to reduce me to a becoming sense of humility; but I certainly never expected my woman's pride to be reduced so low as to induce the feeling of gratification with which the frank and honest offers of the Duke of Merioneth have penetrated my feelings. No man could throw himself more freely into a woman's power, without a single reservation in behalf of his own self-love; and aggravating indeed must be the self-conviction, that not even the host of advantages combined in his alliance could avail to turn the scale in his favour. A man so nobly endowed has a right to fancy that personal antipathy or previous engagement alone could determine his rejection. Fortunately for his peace of mind, the Duke of Merioneth has accepted the latter alternative.

That I have acted unwisely in renouncing such a marriage I verily believe; but, of the cardinal virtues, prudence has ever held the lowest place in my estimation. The Duke is in the highest sense of the word a nobleman, a man of cul-

tivated mind, of equal temper, of right principle, irreproachable throughout all the relations of life. Yet, though my existence as his wife would be secure not only from the storms, but even the shifting breezes of mortal destiny, a calm so hopelessly monotonous would torpify my faculties. I must have something to excite—something to rouse me. I must look up, if not with fear and trembling, at least with deference and a strong sense of inferiority, to the husband who is to be obeyed and honoured as well as loved. I should assuredly degenerate into a mere automaton, a miserable creature of luxury and selfishness, were not my better qualities stirred into activity by the companionship of one far nobler-minded than myself.

Enfin—the thing is done; and done, thank heaven, without reference to the intelligence afforded me by the duke, concerning one who has occupied too large a share in my consideration.

—It is pleasant to be diverted from one's own perplexities by agreeable tidings of the affairs of others. I have just received a letter from Lady Cecilia, in acknowledgment of an obligation, dictated by that fine, free, generous spirit of gratitude which accepts as frankly as it would bestow. During the first two years of my widowhood, I was able to lay aside without penuriousness, a sum of nearly five thousand pounds from my jointure, which I intended should accumulate for the benefit of my little nephews; for, though Herbert was too proud to accept assistance in his own person, he could not have refused it in aid of the education of his sons. The altered circumstances of the family have happily superseded all necessity for such a provision. On receiving Armine's letter, announcing the death of Sir Robert, I accordingly wrote to my solicitor, directing him to make over the fund to my kinsman, Sir Jenison Delaval, in trust for his own son Clarence; and it seems that the gift has so far stimulated the pride of "Sare Delafals," that he offers to make a settlement of a thousand a-year on his son, if the Clackmannans will consent to give him Lady Alicia and exert their interest to obtain him an appointment; for nothing does he so much apprehend for Clarence as an idle life about town. At present, no answer to these proposals has been received from Clackmannan Court. But Lady Cis is sanguine; and thanks me as the second providence of her son. If a few slight sacrifices of extravagance on my part should have proved the means of forwarding the happiness of these young people, I shall be richly rewarded.

—Spent the evening at Princess Zabuschka's, where the English much do congregate, and where I perceived that the waves of society had closed as quickly over the head of Lady Sarah Andover, as those of the ocean over some nameless wreck. Her fate, which for the first two days afforded a

themé for universal commiseration, was slightly and slightly alluded to. "Poor thing—poor woman—sad example—frightfully worldly-minded—hurried off from the stage where her foibles were exhibited to the last—unregretted by her family—neglected by her servants—despised by her dependents," &c., &c., &c. And all this of one who, but a week ago, was their hand-in-hand companion; courted as an associate, consulted as an oracle of the temple of fashion or folly!

"Pray when will the body arrive in England?" inquired Lady Harriet Snipsnap, of Mr. de Rawdon.

"About the 17th; but the family burial place is in the north."

"The *family* burial-place! *Where*, I wonder? The Andovers are quite new people; cotton-spinners, or calico-printers, or something of that sort. I have heard of living in cotton,—but I never heard of being buried in it. I dare say the family vault is in the new Liverpool cemetery. By the way, who has got Lady Sarah's parraquet?"

And such, doubtless, is the tone in which my own last moments will one day or other be discussed, falling, as I shall, like an autumnal leaf, whirled from a fruitless bough to winter on the regardless earth! Such is the penalty of being alone in the world! The French take up their defence against this consciousness of isolation, by living in communities. They lodge, eat, drink, live, die, and are buried in the solitary mausoleum, is not for *them*. Had the cast-away of Juan Fernandez been a Frenchman, he would have hung himself to the first palm tree on the coast.

At Princess Zabuschka's, by the way, I met our quondam London heiress, Madame di Campo Fiorito, who seems to have abdicated her glories in setting foot once more upon the continent. It is far more difficult to *faire événement* at Paris than in London; not from press of rivalship, but from the secondary influence of what is called fashion. In the Almack's sphere, a beauty may reign an idol for a certain number of weeks. Her season must not be too long, and should she rashly attempt a second, from the sublime of poetry she "tumbles down to prose," and the world takes a bitter revenge for its former infatuation. Here, there is no definite *local* for a graven image to be set up. If idolized at court, the reigning beauty is a mark of scorn for the Faubourg St. Germain; if worshipped in the Faubourg, the *salon* of the Duc d'Orleans votes her a quiz. Madame di Campo Fiorito passes in Paris for a pretty, pleasing woman; but no newspaper commemorates her triumphs, no *petits soupers* are given in her honour, no duels fought, no honeyed stanzas perpetrated. She must be surprised to find herself deprived of her temporary importance, like a comet or a bird of Paradise stripped of its resplendent tail.

Now that I am becoming habituated to the habits of French society, I cannot but figure to myself how many foreigners, females especially, must be struck by the familiarity and want of deference commonly exhibited in England towards those of the opposite sex. The utmost intimacy scarcely privileges a Frenchman to take a lady's hand on entering a room, an obsequious bow forming the usual limit of his salutations; nor would he dream of lolling on a sofa, or occupying an arm-chair, in a lady's drawing-room in the presence of strangers. At evening parties men rarely obtain a seat; and their style of accosting ladies, even where the greatest familiarity exists in private, is distant and respectful. The courtesies of life are never for a moment lost sight of; and gallantry exacts as much consideration towards the least lovely and least distinguished woman, as fashion demands from a Crockfordite towards an Almack's patroness, or the young Marchioness of Abercorn. The London men of the present day have their own time and place for being civil; but where is the dandy who would entertain the least scruple at refusing to dance with some Miss Brown, voted *mauvais ton* at the club; or at leaving an aunt from Russell Square to find her way alone to her carriage, on a rainy night at the Opera? The days of chivalry may be over; but their legendary influence has proved more permanent on the banks of the Seine than on those of the Thames.

— We are now arrived at the close of the Carnival, and next week, *Mardi Gras* closes at once the pleasures of the rabble and the *fêtes* of the *beau monde*. The court balls are already over; and during Lent, or at least till the 'nicarème, or half-way house of penitence, there will be no dancing. After Easter a few entertainments will be given, chiefly in the diplomatic circles; but at the first indication of summer, as soon as the lime-trees are in leaf, the great world disperses; and the pretty villas in the neighbourhood of Paris become the point of attraction. At that period, however, the Herberts will pass a month in town, for the purpose of collecting furniture for Trentwood Park; and I have promised to bear them company on their return to Staffordshire.

Interrupted by a visit from Lady Evelyn Beresford, who has made her way to Paris in a *dormeuse*, propped on air-cushions, to consult Hahnemann (the great father, as he is called, or, more properly, great-grandfather of Homœopathy) on the maladies of her disordered imagination.

“I am quite amazed,” murmured the sick lady, after a few introductory compliments to herself and me, “to observe the barbarism still prevailing in France. Have you noticed, my dear Mrs. Delaval, that the number of herborists' shops in Paris exceeds that of the apothecaries? Although practical chemistry is supposed to have attained its highest perfection among the French, the great mass of the people indulge in

the frightful practice of deluging themselves with diet-drinks, and home-made decoctions! A solitary herb-shop in Covent Garden barely supports itself: here there exist hundreds, which enable people to poison themselves on the easiest terms."

"Easier, you think, than those afforded by the patent quackeries of England?" said I; surely *eau de Tilleul*, or siccory water, is less pernicious than the colchicum and prussic acid, which a shilling and a penny worth of stamp duty enable some ignoramus to place at the disposal of a hypochondriac as ignorant as himself."

"They assure me, that even every prison here has its *tisannier*!" murmured the elegant valetudinarian, in a tone of commiseration. "What despotism!"

"And every work-house in England, its experimentalizing doctor!" I replied. "Reste à savoir whether balm tea or acetate of morphine affords to these functionaries the readiest means of justifiable homicide upon those entrusted to their care."

— I am much puzzled when I consider the confectionary-world, of silver-tongued and gossamer-souled dukes and marchionesses, truffle-crammed deputies, or musk-saturated bankers' wives, who constitute *my* experience of the French nation, where to look for the fearful elements of national character, which produced that conflagration slaked in blood, the great Revolution; or the enthusiasm which enabled Napoleon to engulf his hundreds of thousands in the snows of Muscovy.

"You see us in our carnival aspects, my dear lady," said the good old uncle of Madame de Mérinville, to whom, the other day, I was confessing my perplexities; "and, like others of your country people, will quit Paris impressed with a belief that we are the most frivolous of God's creatures—engrossed by *spectacles* and mummeries—from Punch's puppetshow up to Racine and Le Cid. Do not believe it. It has been the policy of our successive governments to encourage the pageant-loving principle, in order to distract the attention of the mass from the sad realities of their legislation. The *gamins* of Paris are, it is true, an excitement-craving generation; and a new melo-drama diverts their clamours from old political grievances. The theatres are therefore made the dog of Alcibiades, with its tail cut off by the charlatans, at the head of affairs."

"By charlatans, meaning the *doctrinaire* ministry?"

"The *doctrinaire*, or any other. During at least a century following such a national convulsion as the crisis of the Revolution of 89, a country is not to be governed without some spice of charlatanry. The mountebank, who composes his nostrums of spring-water, though a deceiver in his way, is less reprehensible than one who compounds them with dele-

terious drugs. Our Emperor, while dazzling the eyes of Paris with golden bees and gorgeous coronations, reestablished the finances ruined by the directorial system; and extended the limits of the realm, which prospered in proportion to its aggrandisement."

"And do you imagine," said I, not wishing to encounter one of those ecstatic panegyrics of Napoleon, so often inflicted upon me in the circle of Madame de Mérinville, "that the *lull* of stormy elements we just now experience will prove permanent?"

"In such a century *what* can be pronounced permanent?" was the old man's sage reply. "Now that the worship of the right divine is extinct, and kings, in their turn, are subjected to the tribunal of public opinion, who can decide upon the stability of a government? To-morrow, evil counsellors may gain the ascendancy, or the progress of years enfeeble the mind of our new Sovereign. More *ordonnances*—more barricades, and, perhaps, more experiments with another *sûre de St. Louis*. A nation that has once attempted to pry into its destinies by the interpretation of *mare de sang*, as coolly as the old women of Paris establish their divinations upon *mare de café*, is never again to be trusted. The instincts of the blood-hound are awake."

"An exciting cause, you think, is alone wanting?"

"An exciting cause, and the coincidence of circumstances. The grandsons of the heroes of the *grande armée* are more likely than their sons to organise themselves into a military nation, inasmuch as the memory of glory is more permanent than that of suffering. Even so, when the eye-witnesses of the sanguinary scenes of the Revolution become a past generation, their successors will recur only to the abuses it served to reform, and new Mirabeaus will live, and die, and be immortal. It has been said of Paris, that its mud is sprinkled with spangles; (an assertion far more true, in a moral sense, than as indicating the excess of luxury it purports to illustrate,) and the tinsel thus mixed up with the clay of our populace is apt to dazzle and mislead people as to its real value and consistency."

And thus, if my old gentleman be a prophet of and in his own country, the French have some dozen years of tranquillity before them previous to a new nation-quake.

I cannot understand the motive of my sister in remaining so pertinaciously silent with respect to Lord Hartston and his movements. Is her forbearance the result of accident or design? Are the Herberts of opinion that since we cannot be lovers, we never can be friends; or are they simply pre-engrossed with the affairs of their own family? No, not that! Whenever I have chosen to fancy my sister least interested in my fortunes, I have been eventually compelled to admit my own injustice and her unintermitting sisterly affection. She has

probably excellent reasons for her silence. Although not married to Lady Sophia Rosanna, he may have other engagements which she is not at liberty to divulge; or, as the confidante of the old lady, she may be aware. No matter!—why lose my time in surmises!—Lord Hartston's affairs are clearly no affair of mine.

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Our carnival concluded gaily with *bal costumé* at one of the chrysocal-Carlist Notabilities of fashion. Ash-Wednesday brought omelettes and penitence for the French, and *petits comités* and the Italian opera for the English. We have now reached the end of Lent, and I am warned by hail-storms, the blossoming of the almond-trees, and of the milliners' shops into Longchamps fashions, that Easter is at hand. Another week, and I shall set forth upon a new pilgrimage.

What have I gained, I wonder, by my *séjour* on the Continent? Have I been as *désenrayée* as I expected—or have I grown wiser as well as merrier?—*Wiser* is, alas! a mighty word to apply to so light a thing as woman; but even Herbert the Gruff will admit that I am at least a trifle liberalized or de-conventionized by my trip. Of all the moral distempers prevalent in fashionable London, conventionality is certainly the most infectious. That world of the two thousand, with its weighty chains, if not of iron, of chased gold—its *codex argenteus* of little greatness, or of great littleness, inscribed in silver letters upon purple vellum—its studied ignorance of all things worth knowing—its knowingness in all matters better consigned to oblivion—that world of the two thousand obtained last year unlimited influence over my mind. Its narrow horizon became my universe, its sneer my law of reprobation; its plaudits, my voice of fame. But travel has taught me that *my* celestial empire is not (as my more than Chinese ignorance supposed) the centre of the terrestrial globe. I have lived where its ukases are unnoted, its interdicts inoperative. In laying aside my bigotry, however, let me be careful not to fall into atheism. Though prepared to rail with King Henry against “the idle ceremony,” and to admit the possibility of enjoying an airing in a carriage with mismatched horses, and servants unlivelier and unseemly, I must carry not with me to the land of etiquette *all* the rough-and-ready disorderlinesses of the Continent. An emancipated slave makes, I believe, the worst of freemen; but I hold myself enfranchised only from the bonds of fashion, and still retain my allegiance to the laws of society.

“Ah, poor soul!” cried Madam de Mérinville, embracing me when I went yesterday to pay her my *visite d'adieu*—“now that the summer is at hand you are about to commence your career of London dissipation, to suffocate yourself in stifling ball-rooms, and toil under an afternoon sun through a round of horrible morning visits. *Quelle corvée!*”

Diamonds, coiffures de cérmonie, silk and satins, in the month of June!"

"And *you*?" said I, anxious to know her alternative for the only objects I have observed to occupy her attention.

"I, you know am less my own mistress than any body. Mérinville's business in the Chamber, and mine at the Tuilleries, chain me to Paris. But even *here*, we manage to enjoy the pleasures of the rural season. *D'abord*, our beautiful public gardens with their groves of chestnuts and lilacs, in whose shade we venture to sit and chat during the hot weather without incurring *forfeiture of caste*. Then, out rides in the Bois de Boulogne, our concerts *en plein air*, our Tivoli, our Franconi."

"Believe, me, London is not without its *pendants* to such amusements."

"But not enjoyable in the same easy way," cried my friend. "In the first place, you English bore yourselves with full dress for every thing, while in France it is held to the last degree vulgar to appear *en grande toilette* between Easter and Christmas. Our jewels, our finery are laid aside; a muslin gown and pretty bonnet suffice for the gayest occasions."

"Even at Court?"

"Even at Court, when their majesties have once established themselves at Neuilly or St. Cloud. But I am referring to my own position. People in general quit Paris for their country houses the first week in May. We French have a foolish prejudice in favour of green woods and green fields, which induces us to migrate in flocks like wild geese on the approach of winter, and wile away its dulness in social pleasures, returning to the country the moment the roses are in bloom. In this instance, as in coachmanship, we take the right of the road and *you* the left."

In spite of Méadame de Mérinville's sauciness, we parted good friends, and she has even promised to come and visit me next year, in the country, with which she deals so unceremoniously.

The Marchioness de Bretonvilliers took leave of me with more courtesy, but less kindness. I had not seen her since her formal *dîner de famille* of forty persons, in honour of the young Princess of Aspern's wedding, in which I was exclusively included. The chilling ceremonies of the signatures of the marriage contract, and the overpowering dinner, impressed me unfavourably. Excuses are to be made for a royal *mariage de convenance*, but none for those of private life; nor shall I ever forget my sensations of sympathy in the false position of that lovely girl Malvina de Rochemore, when I saw her settled by a notary, like a "piece of meadow land," or "capital messuage" on a man with whom she had never been allowed to hold ten minutes of confidential conversation.

Madame de Bretonvilliers, by the way, complimented herself and me, on the advantageous opinions I must have formed of French society. Few English, she said, enjoyed the opportunities conceded to myself of becoming acquainted with *les intérieurs* of the Faubourg St. Germain; and it afforded her satisfaction that my views of Paris had not been limited to the vulgar mobs of the court of Louis Philippe, or the bad company of the Chaussée d'Antin!

— I have since had an unexpected insight into the paradise she represents as guarded by flaming swords against the approach of my country people. The Vauguyons, conscious of their want of hospitality towards a person by whose family their heir apparent was treated in England as *l'enfant de la maison*, insisted on giving me a farewell dinner; and, stately as I had found the hotel de Bretonvilliers, its formalities were far exceeded by those of the hotel de la Vauguyon. I admit, that there is something vastly grand-seigneurial in the aspect of the place and its inhabitants. Neither the Revolution nor the Usurpation seems to have exercised the slightest influence on its feudal attitude. The family occupy the whole hotel, as in those former times, when every nobleman had his *appartement d'hiver* on the first floor, and his *appartement d'été* on the *rez-de-chaussée*, opening to the garden. The picture gallery boats, in addition to several *chef-d'œuvre*s, a variety of family portraits, from the middle ages and their coats of mail, to the age of Louis XV. with its coats of velvet; while the exceeding ugliness of the arras hangings bespeak them to be antecedent to Colbert and his Gobelins. The society assembled in these antique saloons was in good keeping with the *local*. The men bowed rect-angularly, as if accustomed to *porter l'épée*; while the ladies spread their brocaded skirts over the massive *fauteuils*, as if unhabituated to garments of lighter texture. Their tone of conversation was an empty but far less pompous, than that of the Bretonvilliers set, which is less securely seated in its honours; and there was a kindliness and courtesy about the elder members of the Vauguyon family, which impressed me with a better idea of *le bon-ton d'autrefois*, than any thing I have seen in Paris. Captivating, indeed, must have been those graces of manner which could throw a veil over the stern armour of feudal arrogance, and conceal the foul corruptions of "the reeling goddess with the zoneless waist," whose worship succeeded.

I was singularly struck by the business-like tone of frankness with which the old Duchess and the Marchioness her daughter-in law (mother to Alfred) alluded to the expectation they had once entertained of my becoming a member of their family. With a degree of coolness, which in England we should consider want of delicacy, they informed me that Alfred had written from Spa, setting forth his attachment, and the advantages of the match, his report of which having re-

ceived due confirmation from their relation the ambassador in England, they instantly sanctioned his proposals.

"But my grandson is neither a *fut* nor a *fool*," said the Duchess, swallowing her five-and-twentieth *tablette de jujubes*.

"Soon after your arrival in Paris he perceived that his attentions were not acceptable, and did ample justice to the honourable spirit in which you made him conscious of the fruitlessness of proceeding to definite overtures. We should have been infinitely flattered, Madame, to have received the cousin of our charming friend Lady Cecilia Delaval into the Vauguyon family; but, since it was not to be, we heartily thank you for enabling our dear Alfred still to pretend to the happiness of your friendship."

I like the freedom from affectation of these people. Without seeking oracles of wisdom under the painted ceilings of the old hotel, I might perhaps have passed some pleasant hours in their society, had I not been apprehensive of encouraging the attentions of the little Count. There is something respectable in the mutual dependence of the family union of the Vauguyons; the well-understood subordination of three generations united under one roof. I doubt whether I could myself endure to live as part of such a community, a mere sharer of the general affection. We English are neither born nor bred with the humility of hearts which renders marriage so much less awful a change *here* than among ourselves. When an English home becomes embittered by the consciousness of an injudicious choice, there is no refuge—no consolation. In our sense of wedded unity,

There where we have garnered up our hearts,
There either we must live, or bear no life.

Madame la Comtesse Alfred de la Vauguyon would be able to console herself for the ill-humours of a capricious *mari* in the tenderness of his mother, and agreeable companionship of his sisters, and chatty old grandmother. Mrs. Colonel Delaval had no resource but the echoes of an empty house when left alone, day after day, by a neglectful husband. And what a waste, alas! was her existence!—What a world of *ennui* was mine!

At all events, if I prefer as a wife, perhaps as a mother, the selfish exclusiveness of an English home, with its repellent street-door and protecting *chevaux de frise* of ceremony—as a grandmother I should fly to Paris. French-women seem to me to enjoy, after their *première jeunesse*, a second almost as delightful—an *été de St. Martin*, when midsummer and its roses are unregretted. But this *seconde jeunesse* supposes in French nature a certain hardness and polish of character, which causes the whips and stings of life to have glided off unfelt. *My face and heart will wear many a scar and wrinkle*

before the arrival of autumn. However bright the sunset of my evening, the storms of the morning will leave their lingering tears to glitter on the leaves.

Apropos of the dîner of the hotel de la Vauguyon, I perceive that among all the blunders of all recent writers upon "Paris and the Parisians," there exists a hankering, real or affected, after the *petits soupers* of the last century. It happened that, at the period in question, Paris boasted two or three old women (Mesdames Geoffrin du Deffand and Baron d'Holbach,) able and willing to assemble at their tables the wits and literati of Paris; and, because the fashionable dining hour of three was inconvenient to professional men, supper was the meal selected for hospitality, and supper was thenceforward to become synonymous with wit and sociability. But in what do these nine-o'clock suppers differ from the seven-o'clock dinners of to-day, preceded as they are by the two-o'clock *dejeuner à la fourchette*, eaten also in England under the name of luncheon? Mrs. Trollope and her sister Intellectuals persist in alluding to these *petits soupers*, as if their feast of reason and flow of soul were unaaccompanied by grosser viands than *gateaux à la Conti*, or Chantilly creams. But is it not written in the chronicles of the book of Marmontel, that Madame Geoffrin's suppers consisted of a *potage*, a roast fowl, a plate of spinach or other vegetables, a dish of cutlets, and a salad, with a bottle or two of Bourdeaux, to be divided between nine or ten guests? and what is all this but an indifferent dinner—the *dîner bourgeois* of a Parisian of the present day? There was no possible reason that Mrs. T.'s dinner at old Madame Constant's should not have been quite as "symposiacal" as the suppers of old Madame Geoffrin, her predecessor.

The coterie of the Abbaye aux Bois, on which Goody T. has modelled so many of her notions of Parisian society, is, in fact, as much a byword here as the "*précieuses ridicules*" of the hotel de Rambouillet.

"As a votary of the incomparable De Staël, and an admirer of her amiable and intelligent daughter, Madame de Broglie," said my good old general, the uncle of Madame de Mérinville, when I interrogated him on the subject, "I occasionally visit Madame Recamier, and it grieves me to observe the *fadaisries* into which the friends of my old friend have betrayed her. I meet at her house several distinguished literary men, whom I should rather qualify as men of letters than men of genius, and who, although rational enough in other times and places, begin to play the mountebank—the Monsieur Trissotin—the moment they set foot in L'Abbaye aux Bois! It is the tone of the place. Every one is expected to stand on his head; and a horse with five legs is supposed to have better paces than a horse with four. *Et puis*, they read their own tragedies, and cry at them—and their own come-

dies, and laugh at them. *Que voulez-vous?* The Abbaye aux Bois presents one of the most ridiculous scenes under the canopy of Heaven."

— Heigho! I wish these people would read *me* one of their comedies, (or tragedies, which?) that I might laugh in my turn, for *sans rime ni raison*, I feel miserably out of spirits. Every thing looks smilingly around me.

The first balmy breathings of spring are perceptible; the buds on the tree, the blossoms on the bough, and the birds waking up new minstrelsy in the sunshine. Every thing seems joyous, every one seems happy; and shall I—I so rich in all the worldly attributes of happiness, presume to despise amid the general exultation of the season? Let me not be overmastered by an idle spirit of repining without motive and without justification. Let me be gay and glad like all things else upon the earth.

“ There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield,
To the bare trees and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

“ One moment now may give us more
Than fifty years of reason,
If our minds drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

“ Some silent laws our hearts shall make,
Which they shall long obey,
And, for the year to come, we'll take
Our temper from to-day;”*

to-day—when the skies are so blue, the breeze so mild, the flowers so fragrant! *Allons!* to the Bois de Boulogne and its violets! away with care!

One more week, and I shall be again in London; one more week and I shall have bidden adieu to this land of lightness and laughter,—lightness we know not whence, and laughter we know not wherefore. I fancy I should enjoy Paris during the spring, when the pleasures of the great world subside, and those of the little world commence. There is an out-of-doorishness about the French, with which the English climate does not impregnate English nature. A Frenchwoman of moderate pretensions finds sufficient enjoyment in spending three or four hours a-day under the shade of the orange trees, in the Tuilleries gardens, exhibiting her own spring toilet and criticizing those of others; or, if a *bonne bourgeoisie*, with one eye upon the strip of embroidery she holds in her hand, and the other on two or three merry little children, skipping under the chestnut-trees or sporting on the gravel. Those who have

* Wordsworth.

an equipage, transfer the same enjoyments to the *gazons* of the Bois de Boulogne, and at night to Tivoli and Musard's concerts. London has grander and finer places of diversion, but none which exhibit such cheerful faces. Our Englishwomen of fashion are too much occupied with their appearance, and the terror of sinning against some minor point of etiquette, or of sitting or standing near some person of equivocal distinction. All this imparts a fretful uneasy air, a look of envy, a look of disdain. There is always some Mordecai the Jew, of whose preferment we live in terror; and the "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" of the comedy, is only dignified into "What would the Duchess of —— think, if she heard of my being seen at such a place?" or "What would Lady Anne say, if she knew I visited such people?" A *Parisienne* is more self-assured,—a *Parisienne* is independent of Mrs. Grundy!—a *Parisienne* enjoys the world with all her seuses, and, perhaps, with that rarest of all, *common sense*!

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St. James's Place.—Home, home at last!—How clean,—how cheerful,—how comfortable! I was shown at Mannheim the shabby dirty-looking lodgings where the Thistledowns are economizing, in penance for pleasure of one little year spent in this charming house. Poor people!—How must they long for England!—How must they miss the thousand trivial but essential conveniences, devised here for the civilization of human life!—What an air of decency and respectfulness about the servants,—what a feeling of homishness, in a house exclusively our own! The modes of life may be easier on the continent; but it is the ease of a beggar's ragged coat which has served twenty masters, and is twitched on and off till it scarcely holds together, in comparison with the decent close-fitting suit characteristic of a gentleman.

I have been spending the day with the Herberts at Mivart's Hotel, and even the hotel has a more comfortable and domesticated aspect than the private residences of Paris. My sister is looking ten years younger than last year—Herbert, ten years younger than ten years ago. I never saw two happier people. The children are at Trentwood Park, with good nurses and a good governess, and thither, in the course of three weeks, we shall remove together. Strange to relate, Herbert has at present found nothing to blame in me. He shook his head a little on recurring to the Vinicombe affair, but admits that Lady Maria's toady has made herself the laughing-stock of society this winter at Rome, and congratulates me on having got rid of her. Since their removal into Staffordshire, the Herberts appear to have seen nothing of Lady Hartston or her son. I inquired after Sir Henry's family, and in a few words dismissed the subject. In England, however, the name of Hartston meets my eye and ear at every turn. Of Lord H., the minister, newspapers and

politicians take care that enough shall be said. But in Lord H. the minister I happen unluckily to feel less interested than in Lord H. the individual.

Dear Lady Cecilia! I cannot express with what affectionate joy she has welcomed me home again! The Clackmannans are not yet arrived from the north; but she entertains sanguine hopes of being able to effect more in Clarence's favour by a single personal interview, than by all the letters that have passed between them. Clarence is still at Vienna, and not to be recalled unless some definite arrangement is made with the Marquis.

My Baden friends, the Carringtons, are staying in the same hotel with my sister, which has procured me a visit from them more early than welcome.

"How do you do, my dear Mrs. Delaval? what a pretty house!" cried Mrs. C., as she entered my drawing room;— "how horribly bored you must have been by the *mesquinerie* of the Continent, after being accustomed to such a charming little home!"

"I have travelled in Ireland and Scotland, and am accustomed to take things as I find them," was my reply.

"But to be detained by illness at such a miserable place as Baden, after every soul was gone!"

"I was too much indisposed to wish for society."

"We got to Brighton in time for all the Christmas gaieties. But Brighton was not good this year. Such a set of people at the Pavilion; Sussex 'squires, and old Bushey and Hampton Court quizzes, who have been encouraged into notice;— all horrid bores."

"My dear Jane," faltered Mr. Algernon Carrington, convulsively, "recollect yourself; or, if not *yourself*, remember me!"

"*You* have nothing to do with the court,—have *you*?" inquired the giddy little woman, addressing me. "Oh! yes—I forgot—Lady Southam is *your* bosom-friend. Pray don't betray me; or, if you do, it is of no great consequence. It is but losing a stupid ball or so. How did you like Paris?"

"Very much; but, on the whole, I prefer London."

"So do I, when I am a thousand miles away from it,—I can't understand how it is. We go to Brighton for the winter,—we come to London for the season,—we go abroad,—we go every where; yet every place which other people find amusing, bores *me* to death. In Italy, I died of the heat; in Germany, of the dulls; London is very well; but one never sees the people one wants to see. Last night I was at Devonshire House: there was a concert, and Mr. Carrington managed to plant me beside old Mrs. Chesterfield, a Derbyshire dowager, deaf as a post, and talking at the top of her voice the whole time Malibran was singing. Imagine how I was bored! Had you much music in Paris?"

"In society, very little. But there was the Italian Opera, and, for real amateurs, the *Conservatoire*."

"Poor Princess Dragonitski writes me word that Paris is detestable."

"The Princess finds herself reduced to a less important rôle than she has played elsewhere. Paris is the worst place in the world for assumed importance. Tell people with a grave face in London that you are Grand Duchess of Timbuctoo, and they will perform kotoo and Imperial Highness you accordingly. In Paris, no honours are given à *crédit*. In Paris, Princess Dragonitski was only Princess Dragonitski. It was useless for her to proclaim that she had exercised autocracy in other places—that she was good for quint to a king. They made her show her cards—piqued, repiqued, and capotted her—and, of course, she writes you word that Paris is detestable."

"Don't you find us all shockingly ill-dressed?"

"I find many shockingly *over*-dressed. I see fine ladies in their carriages, shopping or paying morning visits in the same *toilette* we wore in Paris for the opera."

"True,—Frenchwomen cannot afford to be fine more than four months in the year; the rest of the time they dress like *chiffonnières*. It bores me to see my maid better dressed than myself, so I follow the *mode Anglaise*. By the way, is it true that you refused the Duke of Merioneth the other day at Paris?"

"Jane, Jane," remonstrated Mr. Carrington, "shall I never be able to inspire you with a little discretion?"

"Oh, if it is a secret, I am sure I don't want to know.—Only the Duke is remaining in the country so late this season, and every body says it is because he has a *passion malheureuse* for Mrs. Delaval. I suppose you have heard that Mrs. Percy is gone off?"—

"Jane, my dear Jane," resumed her husband, "you know very well that Lady Grace Gosling saw Mrs. Percy get out of her carriage at her own door this morning. It was merely a scandalous rumour, and is already universally contradicted."

"Well, if she did not go *off*, she might as well have done so, for every one says things cannot go *on*. Lord Perryn was actually——"

"Mrs. Carrington, I must really beg you to have more regard for yourself and me," cried her spouse; "God knows what may be the consequence of your putting such reports into circulation. If you intend me to accompany you to Somerset House, pray lose no further time."

"Oh! I had forgotten Somerset House. What a bore this hot day!—We shall positively be stifled!—But perhaps the sooner we get it over, the better. Good bye, Mrs. Delaval, you must come soon and dine with us." And right glad

was I to be delivered from the *ennuyée* and the *ennuyante*!—What right has a woman like Mrs. Algernon Carrington, who adds nothing to society but the weight of her own uselessness and inanity, to find so much fault with the tediousness of the world and its ways?

— Armine assures me that Herbert has never exhibited a single moment of ill humour since he became rich and independent. How many people, whom the world calls fractious and disagreeable, are debarred from the free use of their faculties by the cause that rendered him morose. How easy for those on whom the claw of care has never imprinted its withering clutch, to be cheerful, chatty, witty, wise! The embarrassed man is absent, his mind is elsewhere; and those pleasures which serve to excite the spirits of the prosperous are to him an importunate interruption. My brother-in-law's brow is now unbent; his wife and children are provided for; and I am every where saluted with compliments on the agreeableness of Sir Henry Herbert.

“ We are becoming quite the fashion,” said Armine yesterday, laughing heartily at my congratulation on her husband's altered demeanour. “ Your friend Lady Mardynville has invited us to dinner. The only person, perhaps, not quite satisfied with my promotion, is my Hollybridge neighbour, Lady Tarrington, who, as she can no longer call me ‘ poor dear Mrs. Herbert,’ has omitted the ‘ dear,’ and I am become ‘ Lady Herbert,’ *tout court*. However, she was most kind to me throughout our cottage days; and, when she has passed a sociable week or two at Trentwood Park in the autumn, I hope we shall be as good friends as ever. She will want to give me advice about my establishment, my gardens, my schools, and my ignorance will, perhaps, restore me to favour.”

— London is even fuller and gayer than last season; and how immense the mass of population compared with what one sees at any given point in Paris!—What a visible distinction, too, in London, between the operatives and the inactives! Here, whole parishes,—certainly whole streets, like certain provinces in Hungary, seem aristocratised, and are inaccessible to trade. In Paris mobility and nobility are closely amalgamated. The hackney-coach and the royal carriage jostle in the public drive; the footman and the shabby apprentice traverse unmolested the royal gardens. No exclusive squares, no exclusive gardens, no exclusive parks, where wealth and pride may purchase the privilege of walking upon dust of the earth unpolluted by “ dirt” of the earth. *This* is the city for the feudalists,—*that* for the federals. I certainly feel myself to have risen in importance since I returned to London, but I am not so sure that I am witnessing the greatest happiness of the greatest number!

"How do you do, my dear child?" said old Lady Burling-ton, examining me from head to foot with deliberate scrutiny, when I went yesterday to deliver her a little packet from Madame de la Vauguyon. "I am examining to see whether there is anything about you new and striking enough to make you worthy of a very, very *récherché* little dinner I give to-morrow. We are sadly in want of something new this season. The saints, you know, are quite out of fashion. That sad business of the dear good doctor's threw them into *mauvaise odeur*; and now, scarcely a soul one knows goes to the Lock, except the old Marchioness who is *imbécile*, and the two old Lady Jigamaree's, who can't afford an Opera-box this year,—and want amusement. I have nothing young and pretty on my list, just now, that satisfies me. Mrs. Crowhurst is grown too shocking. People won't meet her. Are we likely to have any good foreigners from Paris?"

"Princess Dragonitski talks of coming."

"Don't let her think of such a thing! She was worn threadbare before she went away."

"And there *is* a very pretty Princess Zabuschka, who will be here soon; a Pole, and who, unlike the Poles one finds and expects to find, is enormously rich. Her emeralds alone are said to be worth several millions of francs."

"Say guineas wherever you talk about her, and I will invite her the day she arrives to all my parties for the season!—She will be the very thing for me. Is there a Prince?"

"Two or three, I believe; *c'est à dire* that, *selon la mode de son pays*, she has divorced several times."

"Charming, charming!—almost as good as the Duchess of —, at Vienna, *qui se ruine en maris*. Sit down, then, at that little table, and write me a pretty little note, to be given to Princess Zabuschka the moment she arrives."

"But I know neither when she will arrive nor where."

"Never mind, it will be better to have the invitation ready, and all such people go to Grillon's. Don't touch those new pens, they are for ornament. You will find some mended ones in the drawer. My page mends me a dozen every morning before breakfast, while he is learning his catechism. There—now direct it, 'Madame la Princesse Ramboosko.' Why do you fold your notes in that odious way? I never open notes folded that odious way. No one folds notes that odious way but Lady Hoogley and a vulgar niece of mine, (what is the woman's name?) Lady Thingumee in Brook Street. Good morning, my dear, you can leave the note for me at Grillon's as you go past."

And thus, young and old, nay, and aged, are steeped to the

lips in the same levity in which I left them immersed. Reform, revolutions, cholera, nothing seems to touch the giddy throng which, every spring, bursts forth like the butterflies into the sunshine of the season !

Last night, I proposed to Armine to accompany me to-day on a visit to our friend, Lady Southam ; but she pleaded an engagement, without acquainting me, according to her usual custom, with its nature. My curiosity excited by her reserve, I condescended to inquire whither she was going ; and to my surprise, she looked towards Herbert, and answered evasively, "She was going to set her husband down at his banker's, in Lombard Street ;" as if his own cabriolet could not have set Sir Henry down ; or even his wife's carriage, without compelling *her* to a tedious drive along Cheapside.

About four o'clock, as I returned from Isabella's, who made me a proposal about presenting Armine to the Queen, which rendered an answer from my sister indispensable, I drove to Mivart's ; and there sat her ladyship, quietly and calmly reading "Trevelyan," a book as graceful, gentle, and lady-like as herself.

I delivered my message, without seeming to notice her inconsistency ; but in the course of conversation, it appeared that though Sir Henry was gone to the city, *she* had been to visit old Lady Hartston, at Kensington Gore. Now why should the Herberts have made a mystery to me of this visit ? What interest have I in knowing or not knowing that the formal old dowager is come to town ? I was almost angry, but said not a syllable respecting this precious mystery, lest I should vex my sister.

— Just returned from a round of shopping with the Herberts, to inspect the furniture about to be despatched to Trentwood Park. Some twenty years ago, I fancy, an idea of refinement was attached to the vocation of a man of taste. *Virtù* was then esteemed an accomplishment ; and to furnish a house with elegance, a feat as meritorious as to paint a good picture, or indite an essay in the Edinburgh Review. Times are strangely altered. *Virtù* is now as purchasable a commodity as the vases, statues, or antique hangings it serves to discriminate ; half the upholsterers, carpet, china, or bronze manufacturers we visited to-day have adopted a jargon parroted from the cast-off phrases of Beckford and Hope, which they apply *à tort et à travers* in a style highly amusing. Fonthill was, in short, a sort of "National *Virtù* Institution," where people were inoculated gratis.

It is singular enough, by the way, that the mysteries of this new faith should have been promulgated in England by the

two most imaginative and forcible fictionists of the day—the authors of "Vathek" and "Anastasius."

It must be admitted, however, that these ornamental departments are wonderfully improved. Nothing could be more rich, more massive, than everything selected by Herbert for his library and dining-room. And libraries and dining-rooms, by the way, are departments of luxury peculiarly English. On the continent, they are simple, even to rudeness; the splendours of a great mansion being confined to the salon, with its gorgeous suite of hangings, fauteuils, sofas, and divans, whence an unmatching chair or footstool, such as our egotistical love of comfort introduces into even the finest of English drawing-rooms, would be rejected as a barbarism.

At present I find people less infatuated here with the Gothic furniture, and decorations in the style of *la rénaissance*, which prevail in all the newly finished mansions of the Chaussée d'Antin; but these, as one of the Virtù-mongers assured us this morning, require to be "in such classical keeping," "in such well-studied tone," that it is dangerous to attempt them unless in the highest state. For my own part I consider such decorations most absurd when applied to the modern temple of Mammon of a Rothschild or a Goldsmidt; while in the palace of Fontainebleau, recently restored *à la moyen age*, the illusion is complete. Hartston Abbey, by the way, would produce a splendid effect, if refurnished by a judicious person in the style of *la rénaissance*.

Herbert seems to have spared no cost or care in the arrangement of his house; but it seems that Sir Robert Herbert left a considerable sum in ready money, expressly bequeathed by his father for the express purpose of refurnishing Trentwood Park, which he wanted spirit to apply to its destination. The place will be in complete order before our arrival.

Yesterday, while the Herbarts were sitting here, the Duke of Merioneth made his appearance, and addressed me with so much brotherly ease and cordiality, that I experienced not the slightest embarrassment at meeting him again.

"You are come at last, my dear Mrs. Delavel!" said he; "and before I have fully congratulated myself on your arrival, I learn that we are again to lose you. What period have you fixed for this ill-timed journey into Staffordshire?"

"We shall be in London ten days longer."

"Then you will at least give me the pleasure of seeing you, with Sir Henry and Lady Herbert, at dinner, previously to your departure? My mother would be much disappointed, were Mrs. Delavel, whom she so greatly admires, to pass through London without gratifying her by an interview."

And it is accordingly settled that on Monday next we dine at Merioneth House.

"So, Harriet!" cried Herbert, the moment the Duke had quitted the room, "after all, the report that reached us from Paris was only one of the mysterious fabrications of that wonder-mongering fellow, Algernon Carrington?"

"What report?"

"That you had refused the Duke of Merioneth, and a jointure of thirty thousand a year."

"A jointure of thirty thousand a year! How could you suppose me so insensible!" said I, trying to laugh off his accusation. "What woman of your acquaintance but would marry Blue Beard himself on such a temptation?"

"To say the truth, I acquitted you. But the thing was talked of one day at the Club; and after Carrington had been rolling his eyes, shaking his head, and looking as mysterious as a high priest of Bel and the Dragon, Hartston observed, that nothing could be more probable; he knew the Duke to be a great admirer of Mrs. Delavel, but that it did not follow that Mrs. Delavel should be a great admirer of the Duke. All the world cried out, as *you* did just now, that not a woman breathing, from Mrs. Hannah More to Mrs. Fry, but was an admirer of Strawberry leaves with a fortune of a hundred thousand a year. But I perceive, by the Duke's manner, that the whole story was a fabrication—that you are a less philosophical lady than Hartston chose to suppose you; and I shall quiz him without mercy on his credulity."

It might, perhaps, be Herbert's intention to pique me by this threat into declaring the real state of the case; but I had sufficient command over myself to keep the Duke's secret and my own.

The Clackmannans are arrived, and it seems to require the exercise of all the Marchioness's good breeding to render her tolerably courteous towards myself. I met her at Lady Cecilia's, where a stormy explanation had taken place between the sisters. The Clackmannans are, if possible, more opposed than ever to the match; but Lady Alicia's health has become extremely delicate, and the parents, terrified for their darling, are willing to sacrifice their own authority and ambition for her sake;—they have, in short, pledged their word that the marriage shall take place at the expiration of a year, provided the young people continue in the same mind; and, in the interim, Alicia and Clarence are freely permitted to correspond. Lady Clackmannan evidently looks upon me as one of the facilitators of the mischief; and Isabella Southam informed me yesterday, that whenever I am talked of, she ex-

presses her opinion that "Mrs. Delavel is a romantic, flighty young woman." I suppose she has taken care to communicate these notions to her friend, Lord Hartston.

In the midst of all these family disputes, poor Cecilia has got a learned Pundit from the continent upon her hands, who is, just now, terribly *à charge*. I found him sitting with her yesterday, *she* looking like a tortoise in a menagerie, upon which some monster of a keeper has planted himself for the admiration of visitors—all shell, and not a glimpse of head discernible! Her faculties seemed actually *erased*, benumbed, overpowered, by the weight of so prodigious a biped.

"People send one over these kind of creatures without the least consideration," said she, after his departure, "and what on earth is one to do with them? Their letter of introduction contains an allusion to their celebrated works, (of which one has probably never heard a word before,) enabling one to get tolerably through a first visit; but after having expressed our delight and gratitude at the honour of making the acquaintance of an individual so eminent, and invited him to a dinner, where, in all probability, he bites his bread and spits under the tablecloth, one really cannot be expected to weary oneself with the rationalities indispensable to avoid making a figure in the note-book which the eminent individual is cramming with items, to be expanded into two quarto volumes of prose when he shall return to Greenland, or Tobolsk, or Timbuctoo, or New York, or the Ultima Thule, wherever it may be, to which the travels of the learned Pundit are to yield enlightenment. Besides, whom is one to invite to one's house to meet such a prodigy? The conversation-men like well enough to meet him once, in order to be wise or witty at his expense at the next half-dozen places they dine at; but when his face comes to be known at ministerial parties, Kensington Palace, and Lansdowne House, as 'the great Professor So-and-so, come to England to write a book,' one might as well ask people to come and meet a *nouveau débarqué* from Grand Cairo, when the plague (the eighth plague) is raging in Egypt."

"Poor dear Cis!" cried I; "and so you are really under sentence to let this Solon of the snows come and prose to you about prison discipline and national debt!"

"Exactly. At first the man talked to me rationally enough of society, literature, and the arts; but I saw he was pumping for his book, and so diverted the conversation to subjects on which I must infallibly talk nonsense, utterly useless to him."

I recommended her to make the monster over at once to old Lady Burlington, by persuading her that his skin is tattooed, or that he breakfasts upon snail broth; after which he

will obtain free quarters in the Duchess's collection of monstrosities.

— What an affectation of listlessness prevails among our London fine ladies; or is it, after all, reality—the result of enervating habits? In Paris, people talk with eagerness of an approaching ball—go at the exact hour they are invited, intending to dance, and dance with satisfaction. They even say with frankness,—“*Quel désespoir si Monsieur Hope ne m'invite pas à son premier bal!*” or “*Mon dieu, je descendrais même à des bassesses pour avoir une invitation de Monsieur Delmar!*” Here, on the contrary, they descend upon “the bore” of going to Almack's or to Lady Londonderry's, as if it were an act of penance, and make their appearance at twelve or one o'clock, saying, “For Heaven's sake don't let us go too early; we shall have quite enough of it.” This, mark you, “is affectation,” and altogether dishonest. After all the toil and expense bestowed on a London season—the twenty balls a night—the ten thousand people moving heaven and earth for invitations—are we to believe that the only individuals deriving entertainment from such vast efforts are only one or two hundred awkward, blushing girls, the *débutantes* of the year?

To the *débutantes* of last year, alas! the epithet of “blushing” is rarely applicable!—Shocked as I was by the prosy courtship and marriage of Matilde de Rochemore, I am far more so by the bold independence assumed by London young ladies—by the positiveness of their opinions, the knowingness of their jargon, and the self-seeking impertinence of their demeanour in society. Before my little nieces are old enough to be presented, I trust some happy medium will have been established, to suspend the necessity for match-hunting on the part of the naturally modest, timid girls of England.

— The first tinge of ill-humour I have seen on Herbert's countenance since my arrival, was on returning from his club yesterday, the day of the dinner at Merioneth House. He was vexed with the Duke for having invited Lord Hartston to meet us. Yet, surely, nothing could be more natural than that he should collect at his table guests previously acquainted. On entering the drawing-room, Lord H. was the first person I discerned, standing beside the Duchess Dowager, to whom I was hastening to pay my compliments; and the flushed cheeks of which I was already conscious, arising from the embarrassment of finding myself the guest of the Duke after what had passed between us, were doubly died by the surprise of so unexpected a meeting. *Du reste*, the party was evidently made for me. The Delavals, the Southams, the Clack-

mannans, the Herberts—all my friends, were there. Just before dinner was announced, Lady Cecilia, who saw me in full dress for the first time since my return, observed, in an audible voice, "Harriet, my dear, do you know that you are grown very thin? Lord Hartston, do you not find Mrs. Delaval looking very thin?" And his half-whispered reply was far too complimentary for me to repeat, even in my journal!

"Bravo!" cried Lady Cecilia, with her usual heedlessness. "My dear Harriet, *this* is evidently your house of triumph. I have seen you receive here, at different periods, the homage of two things unique after their kind—a yellow union-rose, and a compliment from Lord Hartston."

While she was talking in this rattling strain, I saw Herbert biting his lips, and looking very cross; but it was too late—his friend's compliment had been both paid and overheard.

In the course of dinner the Duke having inquired whether he should meet me at the ball at Devonshire House on Friday, I replied in the negative.

"At Lady Ailesbury's, then, or Lady Cadogan's, or ——"

"You will meet me nowhere this season," said I, interrupting his interrogatories;—"I am in London for so short a time, and tired myself so completely last year with a double season, that I shall pass my few weeks in town exclusively among my friends."

"I accept your presence here, then, as a double compliment," replied he; "and if you will repeat the favour of your visit at Hazelbank (which you were so kind as to admire last season,) I will take care that you still find yourself 'exclusively among your friends.'"

"Yes, my dear Mrs. Delaval, you *must* really come to Hazelbank," added the Duchess. "I have not been there yet this spring; and it will ensure me a pleasant day, if we can arrange a little party there under your auspices. In fact, I shall not visit Hazelbank, unless you promise to meet me."

In the evening we had a little music. Lady Alicia Spottiswoode sings Scottish ballads enchantingly; and I fulfilled my part in the concert by an air composed for Rubini in Bellini's unpublished opera, which I learned at Paris from himself.

It seems, however, that in defiance of the determination I expressed to the Duke, I am *not* to remain altogether in the shade. At Sir Henry Herbert's earnest request, I accompanied Armine the other day to the Drawing-Room; and, in consequence of Lady Southam's presentation, we have both received invitations for the ball at St. James's on Monday next. I will not, *à la mode des fashionables*, affect to regret this;

and such a ball is of course an exception that need not be cited against me. My preparations carried me this morning to my old friend, Mrs. Hemstitch, from whom I learned that my *protégé*, young Forster, has obtained a step in his office, and is doing honour to me and himself; for which satisfaction, I am indebted to Lord Hartston.

— Our *déjeuner* at Hazelbank was, if possible, more charming than that of last year—more charming to *me*, because the Herberts were there for the first time, and enchanted with the place. There were not above forty people present, including Prince and Princess Zabuschka, whom I requested the Duke to invite, with Alfred de la Vauguyon as their *cicerone*. Lady Alicia was looking beautiful. She is greatly improved this season; and, now that her anxiety respecting her engagements to Clarence is removed, is grown lively and conversible. As I was walking through the conservatories with the Herberts, admiring some exquisite botanical novelties, introduced since last summer, Lord Hartston, who accompanied us, picked a leaf or two from a geranium, and placed them in his button-hole.

"Is that geranium one of the scented kinds?" said I carelessly. "I was not aware of it."

"Nor I," was his quiet answer. "To *me* it serves to commemorate a *souvenir*. I was standing by that very plant, and leaning against that very pillar, last year, when for the first time you condescended to address me."

Fortunately, neither Cecilia nor Sir Henry overheard the compliment; the former would have been too much amused, the latter too angry. Before the close of the day, I received a still greater compliment from a different person. The Duke of M. having contrived to lead me by degrees apart from the rest of the party, down a beautiful *allée verte*, beside an old wall, overgrown with honeysuckles, inquired, in a very faltering voice, whether time and reflection might not have wrought some favourable change in my feelings towards him.

"I importune you on this subject," said he, "for the last time; but I would not willingly relinquish a pursuit so dear, and so warmly approved by all to whom my happiness is a matter of interest, without one further effort in my own behalf. Be kind, dearest Mrs. Delaval; be generous. I cannot promise you happiness, I can only promise every care, to make you happy, which the fondest affection and devotion can suggest. Tell me, then, am I absolutely hopeless of softening your resolutions against me?"

It was painful, if not difficult, to repeat my former answer; and my noble-spirited admirer was really so diffuse and so un-

guarded in the expression of his grief and disappointment, that I fear he was overheard by Herbert, who met us, with Lady Southam on his arm, at a turn of the shrubbery. The business, however, is now completely set at rest; I have succeeded in satisfying the Duke that I know my own mind.

— This morning, according to an appointment made yesterday at Hazelbank, I accompanied the Duchess of Merioneth to the exhibitions at Somerset House, and the Water Colours; and, having recently visited the *exposition* by modern artists, at the Louvre, was not a little gratified to observe the eminent superiority of my own countrymen. On entering every modern public gallery, whether in France or England, the eye is disagreeably struck by a number of glaring daubs, the production of young or talentless artists; but a second glance brings to view in Paris the graceful elegant portraits of Dubufe, a variety of infinitely clever *tableaux de genre*, and many meritorious specimens of sculpture—upon which art the French Government bestows liberal patronage; while in England our steps are soon arrested by *chef-d'œuvres*. The fine characteristic portraits of Phillips, Briggs, Pickersgill—the striking compositions of Wilkie, Leslie, Mc Clise, and Cattermole—the exquisite works of Edwin Landseer—the fine landscapes of Callcott, Constable, Stanfield, Daniell—the wonders of Martin and Danby—the busts of Chantry—the groups of Westmacott—are such as to render one proud of the state of the fine arts of Great Britain, compared with all contemporary schools. But the foregoing names are great and established, and a lover of the arts will find in almost every gallery in London delicious specimens of English landscape and composition, by artists comparatively unknown, such as in other countries would be applauded to the skies. Fortunately, the patronage of England lies with the public; and these pictures are purchased by wealthy individuals, of names equally obscure, and taste equally refined. I observed, by the way, in Paris, that water-colour drawings, by well known English artists, command enormous prices, nay, twice as much as the sketches of Camille Roqueplan, or Tony Johannot; for it is *du bon-ton* for a *boudoir* or fashionable album to be graced by these charming exotics. What presumption on the part of those who affect to despise the exhibition at the Royal Academy,—a display which men of genius have laboured to enrich with a hundred original efforts of fancy, or views of the ever varying beauties of nature!

The Duchess made several purchases, which she presented to her son, for Hazelbank; among others, some clever zoological epigrams, by Hancock, and a pair of beautiful landscapes, by Chambers and Wilson. There was a sketch by

Mc Clise, of which I longed to possess myself; but alas! I have neither house nor home in which to place it. My tenancy in St. James's Place expires in a few months; and then what will become of me and mine?

Tuesday.—I am glad to have been present at the Royal Ball; first as regards the distinction conferred on myself; and secondly, as regards the enjoyment of a pleasant evening. I was anxious, too, for an opportunity of seeing Princess Victoria, concerning whose appearance I was so often interrogated on the continent. Her Royal Highness is grown since I saw her at the drawing-room last year; has a very pleasing countenance and manner, and bears a striking resemblance to the portraits of the late Princesses Charlotte and Amelia. Had I not known her to be the heiress presumptive, I should have noticed her as a fair, elegant, Saxon (or rather *English*) looking girl.

The Queen's ball was far from so brilliant as that of the Tuilleries, the apartments being neither so lofty nor so well lighted. But the whole thing bears closer examination. The *men* have twice as much the air of gentlemen as the French courtiers; and, if I may presume to decide upon my own sex, I should say that, although French women are better dressed, the English are better looking. The sons and daughters of Louis Philippe, all so handsome, and of so distinguished an appearance, impart, indeed, peculiar interest to the *fétes* at the Tuilleries; but, in this respect, the Court of England will soon acquire a new feature, and the suitors likely to throng around our royal Portia, the object of such deep and national European interest, will lend a charm even to the gew-gaw palace at Pimlico.

As I declined dancing, the Duke of Merioneth, who wished to engage me the moment I entered the room, obtained the hand of Lady Alicia, and they had a place assigned them in the quadrille with the young princess. I stood for some time with Lady Southam and the Herberts, talking over the Rhine with Lord Hampton, who is just returned from Italy. But the moment Lord Hartston could disengage himself from the royal party, he came to us, and scarcely left us throughout the evening. He took me into the supper-room, which was much better served than that at the Tuilleries, though affording a less striking *spectacle*.

—Lady Southam has asked me to accompany her to-night to the Royal box at Drury Lane, to hear Malibran; so I must hasten to dine and dress. In London, everything must be dressed for.

We had no one with us at the theatre but Lord Southam.

and a rather pleasant Mr. Warburton, who is in some way or other attached to the Court. As Lord Hartston heard us make the engagement, I thought it likely he might visit our box, not remembering that an important question was before the House, which rendered his absence impossible. Malibran, however, was sufficient; Malibran, whom I heard for the first time, and could see and hear for ever. She is the first operatic performer I have seen who strikes me as a woman of genius. Grisi has *talent*, but Malibran infinitely more. Whether singing or acting, she engrossed my whole attention while on the stage, and haunted my dreams all night.

Thursday.—I have just had a visit from Cecilia, whom I had not seen since the breakfast at Hazelbank. She has never been invited to the Queen's balls; a circumstance to which she avoids all allusion, but which I suspect is a source of great vexation, for she has a fit of nervous illness whenever they take place.

"Why did you not come and see me on Tuesday?" she inquired, in a peevish tone.

"I was tired after the ball, and dined early, to go to the play with the Southams."

"The play! Who ever goes to the play, except schoolboys during the holidays, to see the pantomime?"

"I went to hear Malibran, and enjoyed it as much as a school-boy."

"Malibran!—what on earth has Malibran to do with the play?"

"She is performing all her best parts at Drury Lane."

"How strange! I never hear anything that is going on; no one ever takes the trouble of telling me anything. And why did you not come to me yesterday?"

"I went with the Herberts into the city, to buy some old tapestry in St. Mary Axe. It was so far that—"

"You might as well have gone to the moon at once. The truth is, I was dying for you to go with me to Almack's last night. If you had called, I should have persuaded you, and we would have gone together."

"I do not think you *would* have persuaded me. I have lost all taste for balls. What object have I in going?"

"Nonsense! You are crossed in love, or ambition, or vanity, and fancy yourself disposed to turn hermit. You would have enjoyed Almack's exceedingly. But I *had* an object in going. I hear the Duke of Merioneth is paying attention to Alicia, and I wanted to observe them together."

"They danced together at the Queen's ball," said I, not wishing to give her any insight into what had so recently

passed between the Duke of Merioneth and myself: "but I did not observe any unusual attention on his part."

"And on hers?"

"Nothing! Lady Alicia was looking lovely, when noticed by the Queen and Princess Augusta; acquitted herself with her usual graceful ease; and when Lady Mardynville came up, immediately afterwards, and passed her with obsequiousness and civilities, nothing could be more high-bred than her manner."

"You were with the old Duchess at the exhibition. Did she say nothing to you about Alicia?"

"Nothing. She rarely notices any young people."

"Or about the Clackmannans?"

"No! I have formerly heard her admire the Marchioness; but I fancy she thinks her too much of a politician."

"I wish we had gone to Almack's and decided for ourselves!" ejaculated Cecilia, with a deep sigh.

"Decided on what?"

"Have I not told you that I am just come from Howell and James', where I met that odious Lady Mardynville; who actually congratulated me before half London on the probability of my niece Lady Alicia Spottiswoode's marriage with the Duke of Merioneth!"

"Merely because she happened to see them dancing together at the Queen's ball, and wanted you and half London to know she had been there."

"By no means. She assured me they danced together three times last night at Almack's, and that the Duke never quitted Alicia's side."

"I should not trust implicitly to the testimony of such a woman as Lady Mardynville."

"Certainly not; but on the strength of her intelligence, I went straight to Lady Lancaster, who keeps a log-book of the movements of all unmarried Dukes; and from her I obtained full confirmation of the whole history."

"Singular enough."

"I know my sister. I saw a match would fulfil her utmost desires for her girl; and will be the means of overthrowing all our projects for Clarence."

"Impossible; the Clackmannans have given their word."

"Conditionally—if the young people continue in the same mind till the end of the year. Supposing Alicia should not continue in the same mind? Suppose her inclinations should be influenced by the brilliant position of the Duke of Merioneth?"

"In that case, my friend Clarence is much better without her."

"What would you have? Alicia is but a mere child! What should she know of principle, or even of her own feelings?"

"Strong arguments, surely, for breaking off her engagement with her cousin. Such a person as you describe, is most unfit to become a wife."

"Ah! I see how it is,—you have joined the cabal against me! This will be the death of my poor boy! It is all over with my poor boy!"

And with some difficulty I recovered her from a fit of hysterical tears, by persuading her that she has no immediate grounds for alarm. Now, however, that Cecilia has called the circumstances to my mind, I remember pointing out, at the Queen's ball, the beauty of Lady Alicia to the notice of the Duke.

"She is, indeed, a pretty little creature," was his reply. "I fancy she passes a good deal of time in your company."

"I have seen but little of her lately. Last season, we used to ride together daily; our mutual connexion with Lady Cecilia Delaval, took me much into Lady Clackmannan's society."

"I thought so," answered the Duke. "There is something in Lady Alicia's deportment which reminds me strongly of yourself. It struck me last autumn, during your absence, when I was staying at Clackmannan court. Nothing is more catching than manner. I shall try to ascertain whether the resemblance holds good in other respects." And immediately afterwards he engaged her to dance, which seems to have been the beginning of their intimacy.

I do not suspect Lady Alicia of the slightest levity; yet I should not much wonder if the unsuspecting naïveté of her character were to lead her to encourage attentions perceptible to all the world but herself, and likely, if unkindly reported, to cause extreme pain to her cousin. Were I to warn her on the subject, Lady Clackmannan might consider it an impertinent interference, and perhaps attribute my solicitude to envy or jealousy: nay, were I even to apprise the Duke of Alicia's engagement, even *he* might imagine me desirous of recalling his attentions to myself. In short, I must leave the matter to the fates, and hope the best for Clarence.

The time approaches for quitting London; and, although the summerishness of the weather pleads strongly in favour of Staffordshire, I confess I am sorry to go. I enjoy London far more now that I am standing aloof from the vortex, than last

season, when not a moment of my time was my own. I see all the people I like, I keep what engagements I like; in short, I am thoroughly independent. No George Hantons or Lord Penrhyns approach me now sufficiently near to endow them with the privilege of impertinence, and I begin to flatter myself I have made a few friends. Yesterday, to my great surprise, old Lady Hartston called here, and expressed with so much real feeling her joy at the change in Herbert's fortunes and temper, and, consequently, in the destinies of his excellent wife, that she quite won my heart. She did not mention her son till she was taking leave.

"I believe you sometimes see Eustace?" said she,—"How do you find him looking?—Most people think him miserably altered since he came into office."

"I have been in company with Lord Hartston a few times since my return to England," I replied, with as much indifference as I could assume, "and have known him so short a time, and so slightly, that I am no judge of his looks. His duties are very anxious ones; I am not surprised that he should be harassed by their responsibility."

"Nor I," was the old lady's abrupt reply; and, with another shake of the hand, she quitted the room.

Is Lord Hartston looking ill, I wonder, that his mother should be thus uneasy; and am I in truth a careless observer of his appearance!—Oh! that I dare sit calmly down, and interrogate my own feelings on the subject! But I have not courage. The question too nearly involves my happiness, and the result is too wholly beyond my control. I certainly feel that, since my return to England, during the last fortnight, Lord Hartston's manners towards me have become strangely softened; and that his own demeanour now demonstrates the preference which before I had only occasion to learn from Herbert's ebullitions of temper. But what then? His mind is too fastidious to admit of the possibility of his attaching himself with the degree of infatuation which I should esteem attachment. Even supposing him to be actually in love as much as his nature will admit, it is not the sort of exclusive love that would satisfy my *exigeance*. Better dismiss him from my thoughts, and turn my steps, or my horses' heads, towards Trentwood Park and rural philosophy.

— Mr. de Rawdon, the *attaché*, who has just arrived from Paris, informed me this morning that, at the desire of his cousin, Lady Maria, he transmitted to England, some weeks ago, by the bag, a huge MS., containing "Sketches of Italy with a patent-Perryian, by Wilhelmina Clarinda Vini-combe, dedicated to her friend the Right Honourable Lady

Maria de R——,” and intended for immediate publication. What have I not lost! Pray heaven the literary lady may not have taken it into her well-wigged head to *commencer par le commencement*, and favour the public with an account of our *naisseries* on the Rhine! If people *must* write journals and diaries of their proceedings by sea and land, why not keep them to themselves as carefully as I do? Which of our islanders, unless, perhaps, Edward Bulwer, is privileged to treat of so sacred a subject as “Italy and the Italians?” for the same reason that his brother Henry had a right to enlarge upon “Paris and the Parisians;” that, while studying the character of all classes of society, he was warmly welcomed into the highest, and “best can paint them, who has seen them most.”

Sunday.—I went to the opera last night *pour écouter le ballet* (which, in defiance of all precedent, I confess that I prefer *here* to the mismatched acts and scenes they give under the same denomination at the Académie Royale), as well as to make my observations on the proceedings of the Clackmannan *clique*. I begin to fear Lady Cis’s intelligence is correct. The Duke never quitted their box; and, though Lady C. pursued her usual policy of sending Lady Alicia home to bed before the ballet was half over, because it was Saturday night, and the week has been a week of dissipation, I am convinced she is doing her utmost to favour the growing *penchant* of the Duke. I shall say nothing on the subject to Cecilia. If the daughter be really fickle, and the mother designing, Cecilia’s utmost endeavours will not frustrate their plans; and she will only get herself into trouble by the susceptibility of her temper.

Lady Alicia’s engagement to Clarence is not even suspected by the world; and every one seems to notice the attentions paid her by the Duke of M. The Carringtons stood near me last night, as I was waiting, upon Sir Jervis Hall’s arm, the announcement of the carriage.

“Pray did you observe the tremendous flirtation to-night between Lady Clackmannan’s little nonentity of a daughter and the Duke of Merioneth?” said she, so loud as to be heard by half-a-dozen indifferent people.

“Jane—Jane!” remonstrated her husband,—“what right have you to make any such observation? The Duke may seriously resent premature comments on his attentions. I beg you will be more considerate.”

“If people do not intend to be talked about, why do they bore one with a public exhibition of their tender passions? Who wants to witness their wooings? I would as soon sit

looking a whole evening at a fond shepherd and shepherdess in Chelsea china, as bore myself with watching the sweet smiles and soft glances of two noble ninnies in an opera-box."

"Jane—Jane—!"

"More especially with such a hawk-eyed chaperon on the watch as Lady Clackmannan; who, with all her philosophy and propriety, is as keen after—"

"Jane! the carriage is called,—Jane, the carriage will drive off!" interrupted Algernon Carrington, dragging her off in dismay, though I am certain no carriage was announced. And by this time the lady has probably circulated her flippant remarks, through a round of morning visits.

Monday.—I accompanied the Herberts this morning to the musical festival, and was gratified even beyond my expectations. Sacred music is a branch of the art cultivated in England with unparalleled success. They may talk of the correctness of the choruses in Germany; but a young English voice is so sweet and pure that it is well worth more *powerful* organs. How truly do I enjoy the music of Handel when separated from the buzz-wigs and dowagerhood of the Ancient Concerts, which always seem to me to smell of Bishops!—These popular musical festivals must greatly tend to the diffusion of musical taste. To-night, I have had my parting tea-drinking *tête-à-tête* with Cecilia, who is in miserable spirits; and to-morrow, "the glorious 1st of June," we take wing for Staffordshire. Heigho!

Trentwood Park, June 3d.—This is truly what poor Lady Cecilia would call "a love of a place;"—so grassy-green, so lightsome, so pleasantly situated. As far as regards my own taste, I might prefer the majestic gloom of Hartston Abbey; but Trentwood is exactly assort'd to the social position of the Herberts. It gratifies me to perceive that Sir Henry has exclusively studied the comfort and convenience of my sister in his domestic arrangements; and, with her four healthy, happy children around her in such a home, Armine would be very different from the amiable creature she is, could she experience an hour's discontent. The children were almost *too* happy in welcoming us; and even aunt Harriet came in for her share of love and kisses. But is it not very soon, at six-and-twenty, to sink for life into "aunt Harriet," without one nearer tie to existence than the secondary affections bestowed by those whose hearts are so warmly attached elsewhere?

This removal to the country, in the midst of the stir and tumult of the season, has made me melancholy. The silence of Trentwood oppresses me. The Herberts, indeed, have an interest here in which I cannot participate. This is their

home, their happiness, their world. To me it is a beautiful spot, embellished by the presence of my sister and her family, but nothing more. My egotism demands something nearer and dearer to rest upon; something wholly or almost my own. I have sometimes thoughts of taking Hollybridge, of which he has a long lease, off the hands of my brother-in-law. But Hollybridge is too near to Hartston Abbey; and the world, or perhaps even my conscience, might accuse me of a desire to approximate myself to the family.

Wherever I walk or drive with Herbert and Armine, their attention is so engrossed by projects or progresses of improvement, that I might as well be at Andernach. Sir Henry is making his wife a flower-garden surrounding a charming conservatory; and all I have to do is to play the umpire in their differences of taste. The park is extensive, watered by my own dear Trent, and skirted by beautiful woods. I sometimes wander out alone, book in hand, as an apology for companionship, to enjoy the fresh verdure of the early summer; and when is the country so beautiful as now, with its springing and flower-enamelled grass, its cone-blossomed chesnut trees, the voice of the cuckoo in the woods, or the distant sound of coming rain promising to refreshen and re-invigorate all nature into still brighter brightness? What is there in all this to depress my spirits? yet I feel more lonely here, amid the tranquil, graceful landscapes of Trentwood, than last year, when ill and unhappy in a foreign country. I fear my restless spirit is wanting in

“ The wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.”

How difficult, in this world of equivocation, to speak truth even to oneself! Were I to entrust my thoughts in all honesty to my journal, I should acknowledge some disappointment that, notwithstanding the good understanding beginning to prevail between Herbert's friend and myself—notwithstanding the undisguised nature of his homage to me at Hazel-bank, at the Queen's ball, and elsewhere—he should have permitted me to leave town for an indefinite period, without a syllable in explanation of his sentiments. I ventured to inquire of Armine, in a careless manner, the other day, whether Lord Hartston were likely to visit Trentwood in the course of the autumn; but she told me frankly that Herbert had not even invited him; that Lord H. had much to occupy his attention at the abbey during his limited holidays; that, when at leisure, he usually visited the Isle of Wight for yachting; that Trentwood was too far from town for his con-

venience ;—in short, that there was not the least idea of his coming.

This is strange. I half suspect that Sir Henry is careful not to expose him to the danger of my presence ! Truly he is a most valuable and considerate friend !

I know not why, but the summer season invariably renders me more *triste* at heart than the winter. In winter, when the winds howl and the stormy rains descend, the earth seems divided into countries, climates, provinces, *homes*, and every family becomes self-dependent. In summer, one soft and balmy atmosphere appears to enwrap the earth, and call forth its inhabitants to enjoyment. United into a single tribe, the world becomes too wide, when I remember that to its collected multitudes *I* am nothing—to none indispensable, and having no one indispensable to *me* ; and thus the summer redoubles my sense of loneliness. I hear the murmur of the insects in the air, the song of the birds in the woods, the remote laughter of the children in the village, the whistle of the solitary herdsman in the fields, the far-away interchange of joyous voices—everything is so joyous and joy-bestowing, that I turn to my solitary heart, and am ready to weep for very weariness of life.

—I have just received a letter from Cecilia, informing me that the Duke of Merioneth scarcely leaves Lady Clackmannan's house ; and that her husband, instead of sympathizing in her vexation, admits himself to be enchanted.

“Never,” she says, “did I see Sir Jenison in such spirits. He fancies that an early marriage would have been the ruin of Clarence, who has merely fallen in love with the pretty face that came first in his way, and is totally unfit for the cares of a settled life. On the other hand, to remonstrate with Alicia is out of my power, for my sister takes care that I shall never see my niece alone, and that no letters shall reach her hands without previously passing through her own. That my poor boy should be sacrificed to such abominable perfidy, is really too severe a mortification.”

Clarence Delaval certainly appears to be unhandsomely used by the Clackmannans ; and all this is the more vexatious because, having taken on myself to write to my good brother-in-law at Castle Delaval, in favour of the young man who must ultimately become his heir, William Delaval, with his usual gruff good sense and warm good feeling, replied to my application only yesterday, that he considered the objections of the two fathers cogent ones: but that if the young people showed any stability of mind by fulfilling the conditions exacted, he would do a kinsman's part in favour of his relative.

I shall not acquaint poor dear Cecilia with the contents of Mr. Delaval's letter: his kindness would only serve to aggravate her present vexation.

Sir Henry is just now exclusively occupied with the arrangement of his library, which is large and valuable; and it is amusing to note the patience with which Armine stands beside him watching his operations, as referee of his doubts and confirmier-general of his opinions. After having once expressed my conviction that the old oak carvings ought not to be varnished, and that a Turkey carpet would be the best muffler of sound in a library, to both which opinions Herbert acted in direct contradiction, I withdrew my voice from the family council; nor is it possible for me to sympathise with wife-like delight in my brother-in-law's triumph, whenever he detects among his mismatched treasures a Wynkyn de Worde or Caxton in good preservation. *My* value for books is in proportion to the satisfaction I derive from their perusal—and so, I suspect, is Armine's; yet *she* contrives to interest herself in all the pursuits of her husband, and sullies without hesitation her white dress and still whiter hands with sorting out odd volumes under his direction. In the same way, when they walk out together, she listens with unwearyed ears to his dissertations on forest trees, or his consultations with his bailiff respecting a great fall of timber which is to take place at Trentwood in the course of the autumn. This is the spontaneous result of her conjugal attachment. She is not aware that she is making a sacrifice of her time and tastes to her husband; and the nature of an affection such as this I have yet to learn. Even in the earliest moments of my marriage, when my girlish fancy endowed Colonel Delaval with a thousand supposititious merits, I certainly never felt inclined to pass my mornings with him in his stables, to which the greater portion of his time was devoted; and now what hope that I should ever learn to love so as to become thus unconsciously enslaved? None! it is too late—it is *unhappily* too late; for in such illusions exists the most hallowed charter of human felicity.

The Southams have arrived at their castle, which is only eight miles distant from Trentwood; and the society of Isabella (who, though an excellent wife and mother, is by no means so exclusively absorbed in her family as dear Armine) will be a relief to my feelings. I shall drive over to Southam Castle, and learn the latest news from London—not to-morrow, however, for, among the many kind actions performed by Herbert on coming to his estate, was that of recalling from the neighbourhood of our old cottage a veteran servant of my

poor father, who had been pensioned off by my aunt in the adjoining village ; and a charming cottage has been built for him adjoining some ancient almshouses—a foundation of the Herbert family within the very walls of the park. Sir Henry respected the pride of Corporal Worgan too much to place him in one of these, and the old soldier has been living at the hall while the cheerful mansion was preparing, of which to-morrow he is to take possession. We have all assisted to furnish the corporal's retreat ; and my little nephew, Montresor Herbert, is to present him with what will be the most valued of his new possessions—a copy of the picture of my father. Worgan's widowed daughter will keep house for him ; and the veteran of Toulouse, with his pipe in his mouth, and the effigy of his lamented general presiding over his fireside, will pass his remaining years in peace and content. All this was most kindly devised by Herbert, as a gratification for his wife.

Trentwood.—Just returned from a visit of a week to Southam Castle. I was mistaken in my calculations respecting Isabella ; Lady Southam in London and Lady Southam in her own home are two very different beings. Her schoolroom, her ménage, her village, her everything that is hers and her husband's, occupy her whole care and attention. I saw that it was only by an effort of politeness, or rather kindness, she could sufficiently abstract her attention to talk to me of books, pictures, men, and things unconnected with her family interests ; and this is so different a mode and mood from any which circumstances have ever made natural to my feelings, that to me it appears incomprehensible. Yet an intensity of family predilection may be, perhaps, essential to the good-government of the world. But for this spirit of self-concentration, the homes of England would not, as they do, afford a model for the imitation of mankind. Lady Southam has not a moment unoccupied, a faculty unemployed ; while I, all idleness and listlessness—heigho ! let me cease to dwell upon the subject.

To-day, the Southam Castle party dine here, with two other neighbouring families ; the Dunbars, with whom I was acquainted in London, and a Mr. and Mrs. Tollemache, of Oakham Hill. No fear now of a recurrence of that unlucky dinner scene in New Norfolk Street ! Sir Henry's new establishment is admirably organised, and all goes smoothly as by clock-work. We shall have a pleasant party.

— Gracious heavens ! what an unforeseen calamity ! How reduce my ideas to coherence, sufficiently to record it in

these pages ! Let me by degrees recall my wandering thoughts, and dismiss these terrors that overpower me.

The London post arrives at Trentwood between six and seven o'clock ; so that I had scarcely time to glance over a long letter from Lady Cecilia, without even opening the newspapers. Dinner was announced a few moments after I entered the drawing-room, before any general conversation had taken place ; but having assumed our places at table, Mr. Tollemache suddenly addressed Herbert with "By the way, Sir Henry, does your paper give any details relative to this sad affair of Lord Hartston ?"

"What affair ?" inquired my brother-in-law, coolly continuing to help the fish, and attributing the observation of his neighbour, who belongs to the Opposition, to some political question.

"What affair ? Is it possible that you have not seen the 'Times' ? Is it possible that you have no letters from London ?"

"They were given me just as you arrived, and I did not give myself time to open them," replied my brother-in-law ; "has anything particular occurred ?" And in a whisper he directed the butler to bring from his own room a packet of letters. Mr. Tollemache seemed unwilling to reply, till Herbert earnestly repeated his question.

"One never likes to be the bearer of bad tidings. Lord Hartston is, I fear, your personal friend ?"

"My dear Tollemache, for the love of God speak out," cried Lord Southam, compassionating the state of Herbert's feelings, "Hartston is my friend as well as Sir Henry's : what has happened to him ?"

"I am grieved to say that Lord Hartston was assassinated on Tuesday evening as he was leaving the House of Commons."

"Assassinated,—dead ?" ejaculated Herbert, starting from his chair, and again sinking into it, incapable of uttering another syllable.

"No, not dead, dangerously wounded," replied Mr. Tollemache. "The ball was not extracted when the paper went to press. You had better read the account yourself," he continued, as the servant laid the letters and newspapers before his master. Herbert instantly rose from the table and left the room with the letters in his hand. Not a word was spoken ; Armine sat pale as death ; and it is to be hoped that my countenance passed unexamined.

"I am truly sorry that I happened to mention the fact at so unlucky a moment," said stupid Mr. Tollemache, regretting

only that the progress of dinner was interrupted ; till at last Lord Southam, tired of his unmeaning apologies, asked permission of my sister to follow her husband for further information.

How horrible was the suspense that followed ! I scarcely know what passed. Observations were addressed to me which I could not answer ; questions were asked which I could understand. I sat with my eyes fixed upon the door, while the mechanical business of the dinner proceeded around me. At length, just as I felt conscious of my incapability to endure the suspense of another second, and was on the point of rushing out of the room in search of my brother-in-law, Lord Southam returned and took his place.

“ Go to your husband ; your friends I am sure will excuse you,” I heard him whisper to Armine, as he resumed his seat ; and while she hastened to obey, he briefly, and in a depressed voice, informed us that Herbert was about to set off for London ; that Lord Hartston, whose case, though one of imminent danger, was not desperate, had expressed a wish to see his friend.

“ But what can possibly have been the cause for attacking a man so worthy and so popular ?” inquired Lady Southam. “ What can have been the motive of the assassin ?”

“ As far as the examination at present tends to explain, mere mental delusion,” replied her husband. “ The delinquent is a middle-aged man, who states himself to have been aggrieved by Government. He arrived lately in England from one of the West India colonies, demanded an audience in some irregular way of the Secretary of State ; was refused ; and, having made his way into the lobby of the House, resolved to wreak his vengeance upon one of the Ministers : it seems to have been a matter of indifference to him which,—the man is evidently in a state of derangement.”

“ How grievously unfortunate that the wretch should have chanced to fall in with our friend !” ejaculated Isabella ; a sentiment that was loudly echoed by all present.

“ When did the event occur ?” was the first inquiry I found courage to make.

“ Two nights ago. Herbert’s letters were written after Astley Cooper and Brodie had examined the wound, and given a more favourable opinion than the first aspect of things seemed to promise.”

“ How long will it take for Herbert to reach London ?” was my next question.

“ Fourteen hours, using the utmost despatch. Post-horses are sent for, but cannot be here under an hour.”

"Will my sister accompany Sir Henry?"

"He does not wish Lady Herbert to encounter so unnecessary a fatigue."

In fine, Herbert quitted Trentwood in his britshka and four at half-past eight last evening, and Armine, though all anxiety to accompany him on his painful errand, acceded to his request.

— Thank heaven, our guests are gone! Thank heaven, I am now at liberty to combat alone, and unobserved, the horrible presentiments that overwhelm me! He will die—I know that he will die!—So young, so honoured, in the zenith of his career:—poor, poor Lady Hartston!

* * * * *

It is not till the day after to-morrow we can receive tidings from Herbert, and to-day's papers will bring only a recapitulation of the intelligence contained in the letters which summoned him to town. Alas! they *may* contain later intelligence. They may contain tidings of the fatal termination of Lord Hartston's sufferings.

* * * * *

I have no patience with Armine. I am obliged to lock myself into my own room, that I may not be harassed with her lamentations over the necessity of Herbert's absence, and her apprehensions that he will suffer from fatigue or take cold. That she should assign importance to such trivialities at such a time!

* * * * *

The post is come in. More letters for Herbert with the London post-mark, and I cannot persuade Armine to open them. The newspapers contain the second examination of the assassin Barnard, proving him beyond all question to be a lunatic; and a somewhat less favourable report of our friend. The bulletin states him to have passed a feverish, restless night. The letters, no doubt, are more explicit.

* * * * *

Will this day ever be over! At last I see the groom crossing the bridge with the letter-bag, and as leisurely as on any ordinary occasion. He has reached the hall—

What selfishness on the part of Herbert—not a line! Armine persists in supposing him to be ill,—him, to whom the very word indisposition is unknown! The papers continue to give unfavourable accounts. Would to heaven I dared persuade Armine to order the carriage, and drive over to Southam Castle. Lord Southam may perhaps have private letters; but as there is no likelihood that they will contain

accounts of her husband, I have no pretence for making the proposal.

Another sleepless night—another weary, lengthening day—and Armine persisting at such a moment in receiving morning visitors!—That odious Mr. Tollemache, who brought us the first sad tidings, has just been here. I would not see him, but my sister informs me that *his* papers of yesterday mention, in a second edition, a report of Lord Hartston's death, and of a change of ministry. That last word gives me hope. An opposition paper may have its motives for anticipating the sad event. I *will* not believe that all is over;—no, I will not believe it!

In spite of all my philosophy, all my attempts at self-control, how incessantly during the last three days have I recurred, again and again, to every trivial particular of my acquaintance with this man—this man, whose fate so many reverential friends, whose fate the whole metropolis, the whole nation, unite to deplore! Had it not been for my own vain levity, I might perhaps have been his wife. But would that have preserved him from his direful destiny?—would it have restored him to his friends and to his country?—Alas! no. It would but have endowed me with the valued privilege of soothing his last moments, of consecrating myself to his memory, and, perhaps, of having embellished with my devoted affection the few latest months of his existence. He once perilled his life for my sake—what, what would I not have done for its preservation!

At last, a letter from Herbert, but containing only a few incoherent lines, and of an unfavourable tendency. That I had but an excuse for setting off for London!

I have devised a method for obtaining the earliest and surest intelligence. Young George Forster, who is in his office, will see nothing objectionable in my solicitude for tidings of his benefactor; and I have accordingly requested him to write to me by every post, till Lord Hartston is out of danger;—*till!* when he is perhaps already no more.

Addresses of condolence have been voted both by Parliament and the City of London, in token of respect to the sufferer; and the assassin Barnard is strongly guarded when brought up for examination, or the populace would tear him to pieces. But what consolation is there in all this? I am so weak—so feverish—that I have scarcely strength to open letters or papers. Armine's anxiety during Herbert's absence luckily prevents her from extending much notice to *me*, or she would be tormenting me to take advice. How will all

this end? I am sick at heart! My self-command is altogether exhausted!

* * * *

—Five weeks have elapsed. In how different a spirit do I take my pen from that which compelled me to close my Diary! How happy I am to-day, yet with scarcely strength to indulge in my feelings of happiness. He is safe,—he is comparatively well,—he is coming here for change of air. Would that I could devise some pretext for quitting Trentwood previously to his arrival, for my consciousness will certainly betray me. Herbert is, after all, the best creature in the world. On this occasion he has quite lost sight of himself; he has never for a moment quitted his friend. Englishmen alone are capable of these strong brotherly attachments.

Lady Hartston was of course anxious that her son should remove at once to the Abbey. The medical attendants, however, would not hear of such an arrangement, and decided that the invalid must go where he would be secure from personal cares and personal excitement. *They*, stupid people, proposed Brighton,—hot, noisy Brighton! But Herbert was luckily at hand; and when he suggested Trentwood, and offered to accompany him thither by easy stages, Lord Hartston confessed himself delighted with the plan. They are to be here on Monday, and Armine has prepared a quiet cool suite of rooms on the ground floor, opening to a charming breakfast-room hung with green, the very thing for an invalid. There is a clump of beech trees on the lawn within a hundred paces from his windows, under which Lord Hartston will be able to take the air during this hot weather.

The Herberts have even persuaded the old lady to come and rejoin her son in Staffordshire, after a business fortnight at the Abbey. I shall contrive to get away before her arrival; I really cannot overcome my awe of Lady Hartston.

—The tone of Lady Cecilia's letters almost puzzles me. She states that Lady Alicia's marriage with the Duke of Merioneth is all but declared—that he dines daily with the Clackmannans—that they are constantly at Hazelbank, where she is no longer invited. But, instead of indulging in her former invectives, Cecilia relates all this without a word of comment! Nay, stranger still, in alluding to the horrible attempt upon the life of Lord Hartston, and the contemplated change of Ministry, coolly observes, “had this change indeed taken place, it might have been a good thing for Clarence! Had Sir Jenison's party come into power, a brilliant career would be opened for my son:” as if she had made up her mind to see him quietly resign Alicia, and betake himself to an official life. These excitable people are strangely incon-

sistent. It is impossible to calculate upon the effects which great events will produce upon their feelings. They are susceptible only about trifles.

In addition to these tidings, Lady Cis has favoured me with a piece of London news, which shocks more than it surprises me. About a month ago, when I was too deeply engrossed to notice the allusions of the newspapers, Mrs. Percy, it seems, eloped not *with* but *to* Lord Penrhyn, who makes no secret of his dissatisfaction at the event. Mrs. Percy is, however, too highly connected for her honour to be trifled with; and, as his former devotion was a matter of notoriety, he must pay the forfeiture of his folly. Mr. Percy has commenced proceedings against Lord P.; and, being one of those stupid animals who do as little evil as good, there can be no pretext for recrimination. Blind as he was in courting Penrhyn to his house, no one supposes his blindnes to have been wilful; it was simply that of imbecility; in compensation of which qualification, he claims the sum of ten thousand pounds. Lord Penrhyn, meanwhile, must unite himself to a silly, ill-tempered, ill-conducted woman, of whose society he has long been weary.

— How idle it is to expect anything like rational sympathy from those beneath us! During our recent affliction, the servants in the house were loud in their lamentations, not over the public calamity that had occurred, but over the necessity for poor Sir Henry's absence, just as his house was beginning to be comfortable. This morning, too, I visited old Worgan's cottage; and, in reply to his inquiries after his benefactor, tried to make him sensible of the cause of his absence.

“Yes,—he knew that a great parliament-man had been shot, and if it had been a score instead of one, the country, may-be, might have been none the worse. What call for setting up an outcry over one of them speechifying chaps, just as if fifteen or twenty thousand brave fellows were lying stiff and stark on a field of battle?”

“Lord Hartston,” I said, “was one of the King's ministers.”

“Never heard tell that the nation was any the better for him! Don't see much use in King's ministers, except to make taxes and fleeee the poor. Wasn't there plenty of people in Lunnun to take care of sick and wounded, without drawing Sir Henry Herbert (God bless him!) out of his comfortable home and away from his family? Be bound, one of the King's ministers, or the whole pack of 'em together, ben't worth the weight of Sir Henry Herbert's little finger.”

I shall send Armine to visit the old Corporal. I have no

patience with the narrowness of his notions; while *she* will doubtless reverence his discernment!

Sunday.—During the last week the weather has been sultry. This evening, however, we have had a tremendous thunderstorm, which has cleared the air, and rendered the atmosphere fresh and delicious. To-night the travellers sleep within thirty miles of us; to-morrow they will be at Trentwood. I dread, yet long for their arrival!

Monday.—They are here—*safe*. He is better far than I expected. I could not persuade Armine that all bustle ought to be spared the invalid. She *would* let the children crowd with her to the hall door, to receive their father. I remained in the drawing-room; and, while Herbert was embracing his family in the hall, Lord Hartston entered alone. He walked slowly up to me, took me by both hands, looked earnestly into my face, and sat down without a syllable; while I was too much overpowered by his mode of greeting, to utter one word of welcome.

Lord Hartston is miserably altered; severely, indeed, must he have suffered to be thus reduced. Yet the physicians assure Herbert that there is no further cause for alarm; that his constitution has received no material injury from the shock; that, with care and quiet, a few months will suffice to restore him. He ought certainly to resign office. Herbert and his other friends ought strenuously to advise him to resign office. But most unfortunately, his Majesty, who visited him in person previously to his leaving town, made it an earnest request that he would neither occupy himself with public business till the meeting of parliament; nor decide, till then upon his future plans. The King, they say, was much affected by the interview. He paid also a visit of congratulation to Lady Hartston.

Tuesday.—Isabella and Lord Southam have been here; but judiciously and kindly abstained from seeing the invalid: they came only as a mark of respect. While Herbert was relating to Lord S. the sufferings undergone by their friend during the extraction of the ball, and describing the mildness and patience of Lord Hartston throughout his illness, I saw the tears standing in their eyes. How I love this weakness on the part of two men of such manly natures! I am not surprised that Armine and Isabella are so strongly attached to their husbands.

Wednesday.—I have been trying to persuade the Herberts that I ought to join Lady Cecilia at Wardencliff, at a time she is experiencing so much vexation; but they will not hear of it. Sir Henry protests it would be most unkind of me to

quit my sister now his whole attention is engrossed by his friend. There is no possibility of escape.

* * * * *

August 29th.—The mornings are now too hot to admit of riding, driving or even sauntering in the shrubberies. Yet Sir Henry continues to busy himself with his woods and farm ; while Armine, who has just got a German governess for the little boys, passes her whole time in the school-room, to ascertain the merits of her system. They treat me with very little ceremony ; for the task of entertaining the invalid has by these means been left almost entirely upon my hands. My sister invariably addresses me after breakfast, in Lord Hartston's presence, with "I must trust to *you*, dear Harriet, not to leave our friend alone. Just now I am so ardously occupied with Mrs. Arnstein, that it is out of my power to read to him or be his amanuensis. You, who are an idle woman, will kindly supply my place. Bring your work here, or the volume of De Jocqueville you began yesterday ; and do not let Lord Hartston tire himself with talking." And thus I am peremptorily installed companion to Herbert's friend ! They ought not to have invited him to Trentwood, unless they intended to pay him more attention.

There is some compensation, however, in perceiving how rapidly Lord Hartston is regaining his strength and spirits. He is beginning to enjoy himself as much as any of us. Yesterday afternoon, being cloudy and cool, we drove over in the open carriage to Southam Castle ; and the preceding evening, while Sir Henry and my sister were riding together, we took a long stroll, accompanied by little Montresor, in the park. I ought not, however, to be made thus responsible for the proceedings of the invalid ; for, should he suffer from these exertions, *I* only shall be blamed.

I can no longer understand how I ever came to fancy myself in awe of this man. Never did I meet with a disposition so mild, so indulgent, so prone to favourable interpretation of the motives of others, or so diffident of his own. He could not be more sensible to the testimonials of interest recently bestowed on him by the nation, had his life been as useless and his position as obscure as that of a Sir Jenison Delaval or a Sir Robert Mardynville. All that he is, all that he has done, passes for less than nothing in his estimation. Heaven spare his life to realise the noble and patriotic projects still brightening his views for the public welfare ! Lady Hartston arrives in a day or two, and will release me from my attendance. On the whole, I could dispense with her presence, for though I shall rejoice at recovering the command of my time,

I cannot help fearing that the old lady will impose a restraint upon our family circle. At present we are very merry. Sir Henry and his wife are, and have reason to be, in the highest spirits ; and I am positively surprised at the *gaieté de cœur* which, forming a most unsuspected part of Lord H.'s character, exhibits itself now that he is released from the cares of office. This morning, we have been laughing heartily together over the presentation copy of Miss Wilhelmina Vinccombe's "Sketches in prose and verse." The way in which she has amplified our adventures between Calais and Coblenz, by the aid of her numberless epithets and the flights of her imagination, is perfectly astonishing. The scenes at Laach (literally as prosaic as a German supper and beds could make it) figures between sonnet and sonnet in her pages, in a style to do honour to the Castle of Otranto or Anne Radcliffe's romances. Lord Hartston, says she, belongs to the arabesque school—all flourish about nothing. Luckily enough, the florid style in which she describes me and my proceedings will never lead the world to suspect poor insignificant Mrs. Delaval in "that lovely and accomplished friend whom I accompanied from the brilliant haunts of the fashionable world to the more picturesque districts of the continent."

— I know not whether it was in associating with such people as the Farringtons and his other Bedfordshire worthies, but, by some means or other, Sir Henry Herbert has contracted an odious habit of *persiflage*, or rather of vulgar quizzing, to *me*, perfectly insupportable. For the last week I have noticed myself to be the object of significant looks and insinuations on his part, far from well-bred, and as far from agreeable. Yesterday I ventured a serious remonstrance on the subject with my sister, and from something I extracted from her, strongly suspect, and greatly fear, that my unguarded correspondence with George Forster is no secret in the family. Not from wilful indiscretion on the part of the young man, but in his zeal to ensure the safe arrival of the letters to which I seemed to attach so much importance, he caused them to be franked by the *chef de bureau* of Lord Hartston's office ; and on one occasion, when Herbert was in conversation with this gentleman, who is his intimate acquaintance, a letter addressed to Trentwood lying on the desk attracted my brother-in-law's notice, and drew forth the history of Forster's daily despatches. The young man might certainly be supposed to have maintained a correspondence with me on business of some other nature ; but Herbert's smiles convince me he has guessed the truth, and I have been obliged frankly to explain to my sister that any further refer-

ence to the subject will drive me away from Trentwood. I thought my brother-in-law had more tact.

— Lady Hartston arrived to-day in time for dinner, and I was absolutely startled by the change in her manners and appearance. The old lady is in such high spirits, that it seems as if her son's danger and recovery had rendered her, for the first time, sensible of his value. She embraced Armine, and afterwards, to my surprise, included me in the same ceremony ; she has laid aside her mourning, and makes her appearance at Trentwood attired like the rest of the world. She is much gratified by the change which country air has wrought in Lord Hartston's appearance, and finds him looking far better than she expected.

This evening, while she was taking coffee with my sister before the arrival of the gentlemen, I walked across the lawn to the conservatory to admire a night-blooming Cereus, and, on returning, rather sooner perhaps than they expected, overheard the old Lady observe to Armine—"In my opinion they are more deliberate than there is any occasion for. I stayed a week longer than I wished at the Abbey, purposely to give Eustace time to settle it all before my arrival. When two people of *their* time of life are seriously and mutually attached, why not own it at once, and be happy?"

This *must* have been said in allusion to Lord Hartston and myself. I shall quit Trentwood without further delay.

— From breakfast-time, contrary to my usual custom, I passed this morning in my own room, on pretence of letters to write. There can be no further occasion for me to devote my time to a person who has now his own family on the spot; and the Herberts have scarcely acted fairly in placing me hitherto in a position liable, I find, to such unkind interpretation ; but, profoundly as they are occupied with each other, my sister and brother-in-law have no consideration for the feelings of any other human being.

— Interrupted by Lady Hartston, who, Heaven knows why, chose to pay me a visit in my dressing-room, though sure of meeting me presently at dinner. She came, I fancy, to enlarge upon her obligations for the kindness I have shown her son during his convalescence, and with a degree of warmth I had scarcely expected from her. I replied as coldly as I could, and in the course of conversation gave her to understand that, next week, I should be at Wardencliffe with the Delavals. She appeared surprised and vexed, for her own visit to Trentwood will probably be of much longer duration.

* * * * *

— After so many contrarieties, so many difficulties, can

it be possible that all is so easily settled at the last! *Must* I admit to myself that he had only to propose and be accepted—that he *has* proposed and been accepted—that I am, in short, pledged heart and hand to become the wife of Lord Hartston? The wife—*again* a wife!—but oh! under what different omens from those which waited upon my first wilful engagement?—Every one congratulates me as the most fortunate of human beings; and my inmost soul tells me that I am so. For more than a year did his better judgment resist the passion which, from the first moment of our meeting, attached him to the giddy Harriet; but *now*, approval and preference go together. He has studied my character; he pretends to see that the faults he had once the audacity to discover, were merely superficial; he *now* decides me to be perfection—the all he ever prayed for in a wife. At present, I have made no confessions in return; but, discerning as he is, may he not have guessed the truth—that my heart has been long and wholly his?

Dear Lady Hartston was, after all, the means of promoting a perfect understanding between us. How fortunate that she made up her mind to come to Trentwood! We might have spent the whole autumn together in doubts and misgivings, but for her active interposition. She, too, declares herself to be the happiest of mothers, her utmost desires being fulfilled. The Herberts are enchanted;—my kind friend Isabella perfectly approves;—I seem to have engaged myself to the man of my choice, only to impart pleasure to my friends.

Lady Hartston insists that the marriage shall take place next month, in order that our arrangements may not be broken in upon by the meeting of Parliament. She fancies herself in a great hurry to become a dowager, and settle in Northamptonshire; and will probably succeed in having her own way, for all the world is on her side.

— I have so many letters to write, so many orders to give, so much to listen to from Eustace, so much to reply, that I scarcely find a moment's leisure for my journal. Another fortnight, and I relinquish the liberty which only, two years ago, I fancied so enviable a possession. The Herberts have obtained our promise that the marriage shall be solemnized at Trentwood. Lord Hartston owed it to the devoted attachment of his friend, to accede to Sir Henry's request. There is, in fact, no object in a visit to town for such a purpose. *Here*, in this dear, quiet, venerable village church, the vows from which I am to derive the happiness of my future life, will be pronounced, without pomp, show, or interruption.

— The time is drawing awfully near!—Wednesday in

next week is assigned as the solemn day. I have already received from the benefactress of the Forsters, a handsome *trousseau* ordered for me by Cecilia ; and Hartston's new travelling carriage arrived last night. We have both outlived the age of caring for such trifles ; but the ceremonies of society must be respected.

Both Lady Hartston and her son have been honoured with highly flattering letters from the King. Every distinction that merit can command, do they receive on all sides. Am I not *too* fortunate in connecting myself with those whose excellence is so universally acknowledged ?

I have just received from the Duke of Merioneth, who is of course still ignorant of the revolution in my own destinies, the kindest letter, announcing his approaching marriage with Lady Alicia Spottiswoode, and expressing their mutual desire and hope to number me among the most intimate of their friends. Alicia does not, however, add a postscript to this flattering epistle ; I fancy she would feel a little embarrassed to address me on such a subject, after her breach of faith towards poor Clarence. Herbert, who was privy to my cousin's engagement, is scandalized by the whole proceeding. "But what could this Duke expect better," he says, "in marrying the daughter of so worldly a woman as Lady Clackmannan, a girl educated without principles save those of convention and etiquette ?" It is vain for me to assure him that Alicia is gentle-tempered and simple-hearted. "Commend me," is his reply, "to the simplicity which has induced her to jilt the lover of her youth for a Duke with the revenue of a prince !"

By the way, I have discovered that there exists a personage at Trentwood almost as ill to please with my own marriage. Old Worgan is greatly dissatisfied that "Miss Harryet, that had the sense when a slip of a girl to give her hand to a brave sojer, should think of demeaning herself by a second match with a lord that has never seen a day's service, nor smelt powder except in a charge on the pheasants and partridges." I must pay him a visit of conciliation, or I shall be quite out of the poor old man's good graces.

How kindly thought of on the part of my brother and sister ! Without saying a word to me on the subject, they engaged the Delavals to be present at my wedding. Sir Henry even invited my good brother-in-law from the Castle ; but William, who is suffering from one of his periodical attacks of gout, has satisfied himself with sending, in his stead, a magnificent set of opals, which Lady Cecilia was commissioned to procure for him in town, as a token of brotherly esteem. Most unexpectedly to me, the Delavals arrived this evening ; Cecilia ra-

diant with joy and kindness. She assures me, that nothing but my marriage—a marriage which has her unqualified approval—would have induced her to quit Wardenclyffe just now.

"I suppose, my dear Harriet, you have seen in the papers an account of the splendid rejoicings at Clackmannan Court?" said she, after exhausting her inquiries relative to my own affairs, as we sat together in her dressing-room, before dinner.

"They appear to have been truly magnificent, worthy in every respect a marriage so distinguished."

"My sister was indelicate enough to invite us to join the family party: as if I were likely to be gratified by the sight of their beacon fires and triumphal arches!"

"The Marchioness thought right to pay you a compliment, which she doubtless knew you would decline."

"As if I had not derived sufficient mortification during the last ten days before I left London, from witnessing the preparations for Lady Alicia Spottiswoode's *trousseau*; jewelers, mantua-makers, milliners, *lingères*, whichever way one turned, nothing was to be heard of but the wedding-clothes of the Duchess of Merioneth. One would suppose no one had ever been married before!"

Few persons at once so distinguished, and forming so distinguished an alliance. A marriage between a beauty and an heiress and the richest Duke (with the exception of the Duke of Devonshire) in the kingdom, was enough to excuse some extraordinary display."

"Ah! it is all very well. I only hope they may be happy!"

"Have you heard lately from Clarence?" I ventured to inquire, half afraid of wounding her feelings.

"Oh! don't talk to me of Clarence; I have no patience to hear the name of Clarence."

"I trust he has borne his disappointment with fortitude, or, perhaps, I should say with spirit."

"*Fortitude?*—*Spirit?*—It is all his own doing, all his own fault. You have been so occupied lately with your own affairs, that I suspect you have heard nothing about my son."

"Not a syllable."

"Well, well, you will find plenty of good-natured friends of ours to tell you the story, so, perhaps I had better relate it at once. I recollect old Lady Burlington, and two or three others equally well versed in the perversity of human nature, saying, when they heard of my sister's and Sir Jenison's objections to a match between Clarence and Alicia, 'Why don't the families sanction an engagement between the young peo-

ple, and they will themselves be the first to break it?"—and so it has proved."

"Do you mean that Clarence has followed Lady Alicia's example of fickleness?"

"My dear child, he was the first to lead the way. You may have heard how dissipated are the habits of Vienna? Scarcely had Clarence arrived there, when he formed an attachment—a *liaison*—a (what shall I decently call it?) with some odious German countess, one of those mischievous coquettes of a certain age, always on the watch to entangle boys like Clarence, idle and fashionable, like all the young *attachés* of all the Courts in Europe."

"And the Clackmannans heard of this connexion, perhaps, even sooner than yourself?"

"Of course they did. They had spies upon the watch to acquaint them with every little fault and folly committed by my son, in order to poison Alicia's mind against him by the recital. This act of infidelity I admit, however, to have been a serious error; for the foolish people thought fit to commit themselves so publicly, that the lady was requested by the Empress to withdraw from court; while Clarence has been despatched by the ambassador to Toplitz, to be out of the way—a measure which I take most unkindly of Sir Frederick, for the woman is a Lutheran, has been divorced once, and will think nothing of going through the ceremony again; and, if she should rejoin Clarence in Prussia, what will become of us? Already I have managed to get my son recalled, and we are trying to have him appointed to the mission at Washington."

"Poor Clarence!"

"Oh! pray do not waste your pity on one so ungrateful for all that has been done for him!—But it is my sister Clackmannan's fault! Had she allowed them to marry at once—"

"Her daughter would never have become Duchess of Mertoneth."

"No, indeed; she has her reward. Her manœuvres have, as usual, succeeded. Well! Alicia is a darling girl, and will do credit to her new honours. Clarence did not deserve her. I admit, that she was too good for Clarence, faithless and unprincipled as he has proved. It will serve him right, if he finds himself obliged to marry Countess Starowicz. But let us talk no more of him. I am come to Trentwood to be happy, and to think only of you."

In the course of the evening, however, she not only resumed the subject, but actually kept me gossiping in a corner

apart from the rest of the party, describing the beauty and accomplishments of the Countess Starowicz, and telling me that our friend Szchazoklwonoki, who is the lady's cousin, declares her to be the most fascinating woman in Europe. In short, poor Cecilia is beginning to be almost as much in love with her son's unknown idol as she used to be with Lady Alicia. If Clarence should continue his career at the rate he has commenced, my poor friend will have worn her heart to tatters, before he attains the age of thirty. No doubt we shall soon hear of him at the feet of some belle of the Broadway:

I inquired of Cecilia whether Sir Jenison seemed very angry with his son; and she protests that son, wife, and kindred are just now a matter of total indifference to him; he and Sir Robert Mardynville being in daily, hourly, *half-hourly* correspondence, touching the degraded social position of that army of martyrs the Baronets, who fancy themselves suffering under the innovations of their subs, the Knights. Her assertion was soon verified by a long and stormy argument between her husband and my brother-in-law; Sir Jenison having consulted Herbert touching the invention of a badge for their injured order; and Herbert protesting they might make it a tinder-box, for any interest he felt in the subject. "A man of ancient family," said he, "is above being ennobled by such distinctions; and a *parvenu* is below it. Titular distinctions, unconnected with the constitutional legislature, are in *my* opinion ridiculous."

If Sir Jenison should but record this opinion, in his next communication to the Mardynvilles, what will they think of the degeneracy of Trentwood!

Sir Jenison, meanwhile, has exhibited, in other respects, a degree of spirit worthy the ancient dignities of the *Equites durati*. He insists upon restoring to me my deed of settlement assigning to him a sum of money in trust for the benefit of his son, which he protests was made out solely in contemplation of a marriage between Clarence and Lady Alicia. Neither Lord Hartston nor myself, however, will hear of accepting it; and it shall remain lodged in the hands of Sir Jenison's banker, till some critical moment arrives for applying it for the benefit of my cousin. By the way, Lady Cecilia informs me, that the *on dits* of Crockford's announce a marriage between George Hanton and old Miss Randall, who, by her speculations in the funds, is supposed to have realized a fortune of half a million.

Lady Maria de Rawdon has enclosed me an epithalamium, indited in honour of my nuptials by the fair Wilhelmina.

George and Caroline Forster send me six lines of grateful respectful prose, worth volumes of such verse. None of my friends seem to have forgotten me.

* * * * *

Tuesday.—To morrow! The Southams, the Delavals, my brother and sister, *my mother*, will alone be present at the ceremonial: my own friends—my own family. Yet I tremble!

* * * * *

EXTRACT FROM THE MORNING POST.

“MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.

“On Wednesday, the 22d, at Trentwood, in Staffordshire, by the Rev. Isaac Smith, the Right Hon. Lord Hartston, to Harriet Amelia Delaval, eldest daughter of the late Lieut. General Sir Richard Montresor, K. B.”

THE END.



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